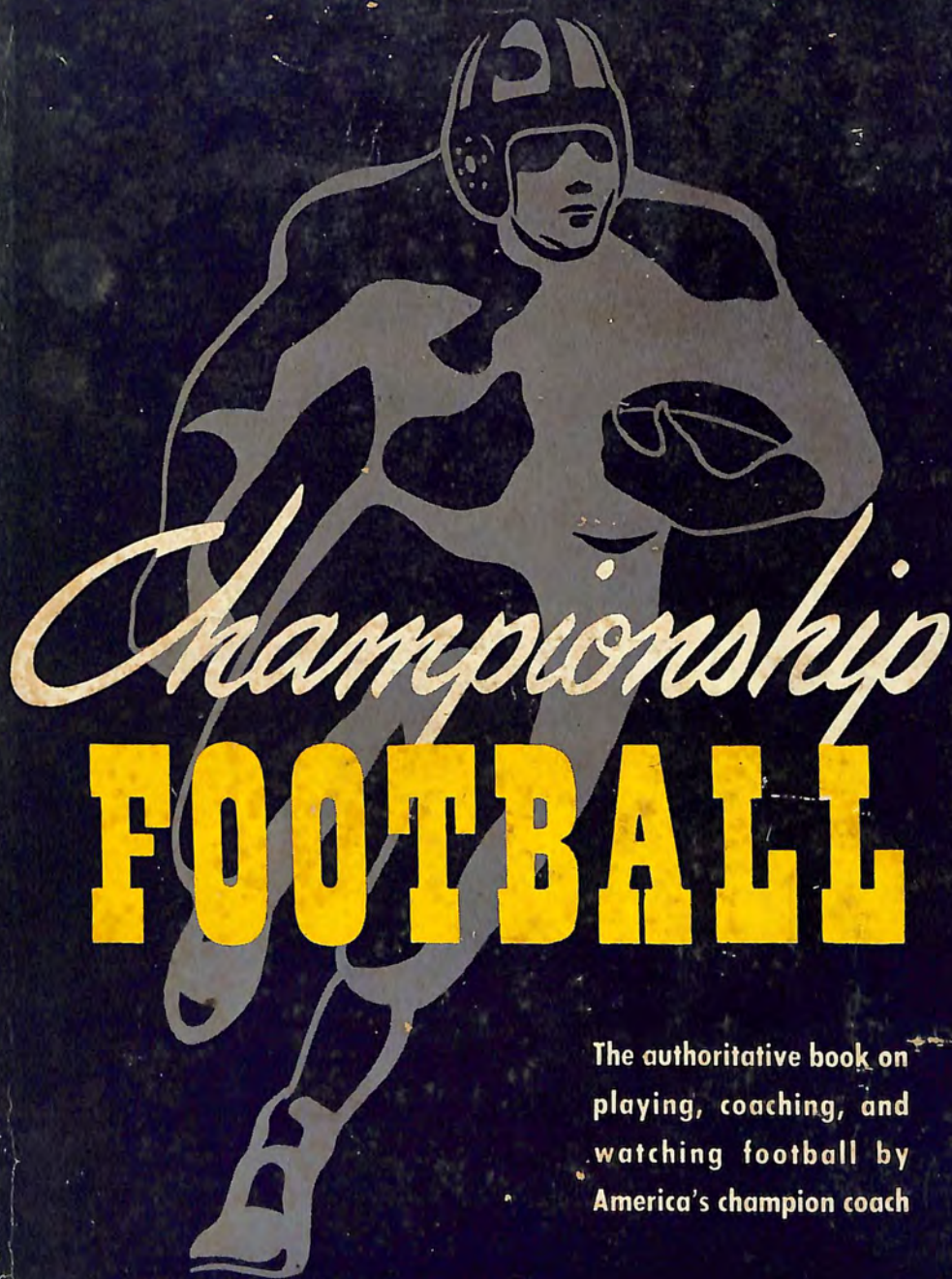


**DANA X. BIBLE**



*Championship*  
**FOOTBALL**

The authoritative book on  
playing, coaching, and  
watching football by  
America's champion coach

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*A Guide for Player,  
Coach and Fan*

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The author says that a team's success depends on the five S's — Spirit, Speed, Skill, Size and Savvy. Then he launches into an exposition of the techniques that have served his own teams so well. In the chapter on blocking he explains the purposes and principles of the subject and analyzes the various kinds of shoulder and cross-body blocks. In another chapter, "The Offensive Line Play," he treats double-teaming, lead and post blocking, pulling out and center play. The designated subjects are thoroughly covered in chapters on "The Running Game," "The Passing Game" and "The Kicking Game." A chapter each is devoted to standard formations and plays, individual defensive play, and defensive team play. The field general's job and training are fully covered

*(Continued on Flap Two)*

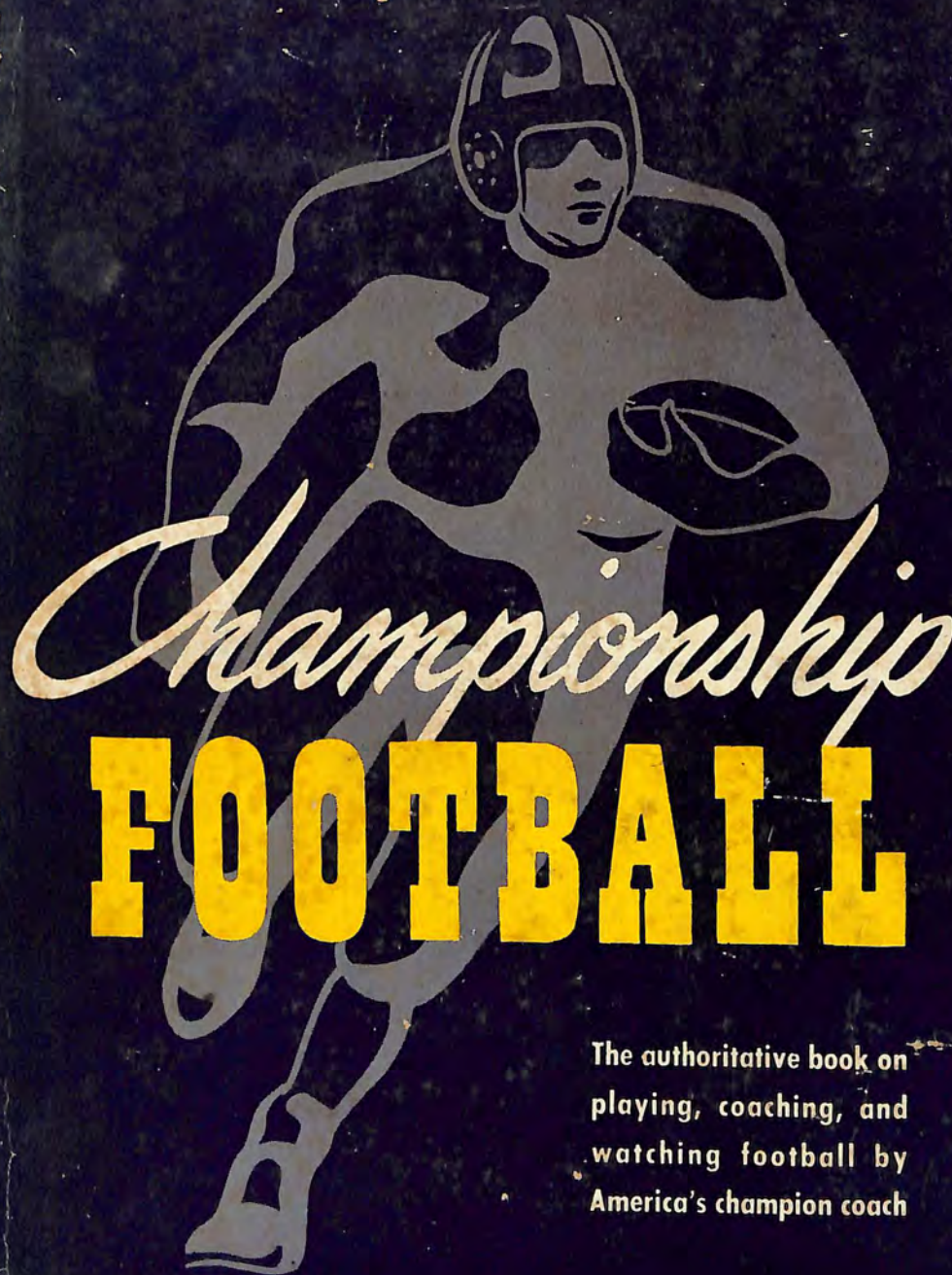


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# CHAMPIONSHIP FOOTBALL

A GUIDE FOR PLAYER, COACH AND FAN

*Dana X. Bible*

PRENTICE-HALL, INC.

NEW YORK

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## DEDICATION

—To the most faithful fan . . . the happiest when we win and the saddest when we lose . . . But who can smile the tears away and put our dreams together again . . . whose confidence surpasses our own and gives us courage to play our part in the Big Game . . . to the real Unsung Hero of the gridiron . . .

THE COACH'S WIFE

## *Preface*

IT WAS with proper humility that I approached the self-assigned task of writing a handbook on football. Thirty-four years of coaching are sufficient to convince one that no football author can point to his handiwork and say: "Here is everything there is to know about football." One also learns that there are different ways of accomplishing a desired end, and that rarely can a coach say with assurance: "Mine is the best way."

Therefore I have tried not to be dogmatic. The pages which follow contain a summary of methods and techniques used with some success over a long period of years. The attempt has been to present a way to play football, rather than THE way to play football.

Teams coached by the writer at Mississippi College, Louisiana State University, Texas A. & M. College, the University of Nebraska and the University of Texas have used, in varying degree, most of the formations discussed here—punt, single wingback, double wingback, triple wingback and T. A book might be written about each of these formations; in fact, many have been. This study thus becomes a digest rather than an elaboration. The same statement applies to other subjects covered—defensive play, kicking, passing, generalship and so on.

Recognizing that the coach's problems and responsibilities are by no means limited to the practice and playing fields, I have attempted to set down some suggestions as to program planning, selection of equipment, care of injuries and the coach's relationships with others—his players, his assistants and other coaches,



the alumni, the faculty and the administration, the press and the public.

It is hoped that the composite will be of some benefit to anyone who is looking for a brief outline of standard football practices, and of special interest to the young coach and player. It is further hoped that the material, while sometimes technical in nature, will be understandable and interesting to the football fan who desires to expand his knowledge of his favorite game. If the experienced coach should garner a few helpful hints from these pages, the writer would be flattered.

Without the loyal, kind and generous encouragement and help received from many coaches down through the years, I could never have gained the experience and knowledge which made this book possible. The list is too long for enumeration. To colleagues at the University of Texas I am especially grateful for their practical suggestions. Many excellent books have been written about football; to their authors I am indebted for a pattern by which to fashion my own football manual.

As for the actual assembling and compilation of the material in the book, I owe much to Weldon Hart, of the *Austin American-Statesman*, for his valuable assistance and counsel. As a widely read and quoted sports authority in the Southwest, and as a founder and first president of the Texas Sports Writers Association, Weldon Hart is well qualified to fill the role of technical adviser in the preparation of a book like this. Our close association for nearly ten years while he was director of sports news for the University of Texas set the stage for a pleasant and memorable relationship in the fashioning of this book.

D. X. BIBLE

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ONE-ON-TWO STUNTS

THE PLACE KICK

*CHAMPIONSHIP  
FOOTBALL*

# 1

## *A Rugged Game*

AS THE NAME stipulates, this is to be a book about football. That means it will be a book about individual techniques and skills, team maneuvers and coaching problems. It will concern offense and defense—blocking and tackling. It will stress headwork, footwork, team work and **HARD WORK**.

Regrettably we are unable to present, for relaxed and comfortable absorption, *An Easy Way to Play Football*. There is no easy way to play football. It isn't that kind of a game. It is a hard game for hardy characters—for boys who are tough in body and in spirit. Players, coaches and teams who tried to take the easy way have come to grief down through the years.

So often that it became a byword with the players, we have emphasized to our teams: You cannot reap the benefits of football without paying the premiums. Premiums are paid in the form of strenuous and often punishing physical effort, in self-denial of luxuries and leisure, in the subordination of self-interest for the good of the team. Played wholeheartedly, football is a soul-satisfying outlet for the rugged, courageous type of boy who likes physical contact. Played halfheartedly, football is a waste of time and energy. Football is no halfway game. To play it, you have to "get wet all over."



## THE BASIC SKILLS

The refinements of modern football are simply a veneer over a broad base of fundamentals—blocking and tackling. These fundamentals were all-important in the old days, and they are all-important today. No matter what formation a team is using or how elaborate its repertoire of plays, it won't go far without blocking. On the other hand, it won't be stopped without tackling. Blocking and tackling are basic skills that every player must be prepared to execute in every game.

It follows that there is no place in football for the man who can't block and tackle. We must qualify that statement to this extent: The free substitution rule has opened up the game to a variety of specialists. Your specialist may be a fast little back, dangerous for a few downs in certain spots. He may be an exceptional punter or place-kicker. He may even make the squad as an expert ball-holder on placement kicks.

These boys are handy to have around and the alert coach will utilize their talents to the utmost. But he would be in a pretty bad fix if he had to make a football team out of them.

The team's heart and backbone always will be those rugged individuals who can stay in the game as long as necessary and do whatever is necessary, i.e. block and tackle. Excellence in these basic football skills is within the reach of most normal boys, if they are willing to pay the premiums in time and application. This is not entirely true of the more intricate skills, such as ball-handling, ball-carrying, passing and kicking. Fortunately, on any given play you need only one or two ball-handlers—and ten blockers.

Across the line, of course, you need eleven tacklers. Blocking and tackling technique will be discussed in later chapters. We do want to stress now that the most important ingredient in both blocking and tackling is: Desire!

Desire, determination, spirit, the will to win, the love of con-

tact—call it what you like; it still can cover a multitude of sins in a football game. The player who fairly explodes in his eagerness to slam an opponent to the turf is more than likely to excel over a mechanically superior opponent who lacks that urge.

### THE FIVE S'S

Although the reasons for a team's success or failure in any particular game may defy generalization, certain components will make or break it over the long pull. These components are called by different names. Let's call them the Five S's—Spirit, Speed, Skill, Size and Savvy.

Essentiality of these elements in a great player or a great team is too obvious for elaboration. No one will go anywhere in football without spirit, and he won't go far in modern football without speed. Correct mechanics and techniques are important, and the resourcefulness, "savvy" or "know-how" that comes from quick thinking and from experience is often the determining factor in a football game. And certainly a player's physical proportions will have some bearing on his effectiveness.

Which "S" is the most important? the least? We believe that size, beyond a reasonable minimum, is the last in the list. Little men have been outstanding players—All-Americans. They compensated for their lack of size with a bountiful supply of the other four S's.

There is no substitute for experience; yet callow sixteen- and seventeen-year-old freshmen of the World War II period played some remarkably good football. As for mechanics, most of a coach's working hours are spent attempting to augment the skill of his players in the execution of individual and team maneuvers. Yet, when he has done his best, if he has only a bunch of automatons going listlessly through their paces, he does not have a football team worthy of the name.

Let's put it this way: Give us a boy with normal intelligence

and coordination, who is big enough to keep from blowing away in a stiff breeze and who has speed and spirit—and we have the makings of a fine football player.

That's where the coach's job takes up.

#### PLAN OF PRESENTATION

In outlining the fundamentals of football and delving somewhat into the intricacies of team play, one encounters a problem in organization and sequence. No matter where one starts or which route he follows, there is the inevitable necessity of referring back to some point previously mentioned or ahead to some point not yet considered. With the indulgence of the reader in this respect, we shall attempt to develop the discussion along these general lines: (1) The fundamentals of offense, including blocking, offensive line play, running, kicking, passing; (2) standard formations, with play diagrams; (3) fundamentals of defense, including tackling and defensive alignments; (4) generalship, offensive and defensive; (5) organization of the football program; (6) off-field problems and relations.

The discussion presumes at least an elementary knowledge of football on the part of the reader and some familiarity with its rules and nomenclature. Because details are important in football, however, we shall dwell at some length on many of the relatively simple, everyday phases of the game.

## *Blocking*

FOOTBALL'S tritest axiom is: You can't win without scoring. To that we may add, with only the slightest reservations: You can't score without blocking. Whether the play is a run, a kick or a pass, the team with the ball has to concern itself eternally with moving opponents out of the play and keeping them out.

### A BLOCKER'S CODE

The player who wants to improve his blocking (and there is always room for improvement) does these things:

1. He studies the technique of blocking—learns to utilize his physical equipment, whatever it is, to the fullest.
2. He practices hard and regularly, establishing good blocking habits in blocking drills, on the blocking dummy, in scrimmage and, whenever opportunity affords, in games.
3. He works to improve his speed and mobility—by taking starts, by running hard in wind sprints and with appropriate exercises and drills.
4. He keeps himself in condition to absorb hard knocks by observing sane living rules and by wearing at all times the protective equipment issued to him.
5. When the time comes to take an opponent out of the

touchdown trail, he explodes! Beating the other fellow to the punch is important in boxing. In blocking, it is essential.

#### PURPOSES AND PRINCIPLES

In general, the purpose of a block will be:

1. To move an opponent out of the play, or
2. To keep him from moving into the play.

For these general purposes there are two primary blocks:

1. The shoulder block.
2. The cross-body block.

There are three potential contact points on the blocker's body—the shoulder, the trunk and hips, and the legs. The first two may be termed primary blocking surfaces because they have behind them the full authority of body weight and leg drive. Leg blocks are secondary blocks, employed when the blocker cannot use his shoulder or body or has missed his primary block.

Numerous variations of the primary blocks have been developed to fit different situations and specific purposes, but they are all offshoots of the shoulder and cross-body blocks.

No matter what the play or the type of block used, these are sound blocking axioms:

1. Get contact and keep it until your assignment is accomplished.
2. Keep your feet and eyes working.
3. Keep your body between your opponent and the path of the ball.
4. When your primary job is done, don't relax. Go on downfield; as long as the ball is alive, keep looking for wrong-colored jerseys.

#### OFFENSIVE LINE STANCE

Blocks are executed from a close position, as one lineman on another; from a semi-close position, as a back upon a rushing



lineman or a play-leader on a line-backer, and in the open field. The blocking principles remain the same, but timing problems will be augmented when the block is preceded by a run and the opponent is moving around under control.

For establishment of principles, individual in-the-line blocking will be considered in detail.

The preliminary problem is to get quick, sharp and powerful contact with an adversary who can use his hands while you cannot. However, he does not know how, when or even if you are going to try to block him—unless you, by look or move, tip off your intentions.

To keep this initial advantage, it is imperative that you adopt a stance that does not have to be varied under any circumstances. Your stance must be one in which you are comfortable, yet coiled and ready to strike. You must be able to move in any direction—forward, backward, right or left—without preliminary shuffling of feet or shifting of balance.

Stance, to a certain extent, is a matter of individual preference. A player may be safely allowed to find his own stance, provided it fills the bill described above. He must remember the rules: (1) Both hands or (2) both feet or (3) one foot and the opposite hand must be "up to or within one foot of" his line of scrimmage.

The three-point or tripod stance with feet staggered is a popular and practical stance. Preparing to assume it, the lineman stands with his feet spread at shoulder width (about two feet) and with the toe of one foot on line with the heel of the other. Either foot may be back as the individual prefers.

The lineman then squats with a full knee bend and balances his weight slightly forward so that the hand on the side of the back foot drops straight from the shoulder to the ground. The other forearm rests on the advanced knee. The hand on the ground is a balancing agent, rather than a weight-supporter. It rests on the first and second rows of knuckles.

At the "get set" signal the lineman shifts his weight forward

again and raises the hips, but still keeps them below the level of the shoulders. The legs are tensed and coiled. Weight is distributed on the balls of both feet. The head is up and the eyes straight ahead.

Summarizing the lineman's stance, we may say:

1. Find a sound, comfortable stance from which quick movement in any direction is possible.
2. Assume the same stance on every play.
3. Keep a poker face, with head up and eyes to the front.

### THE LINE CHARGE

A good lineman's charge is like the release of a tightly coiled spring. At the instant the ball is snapped, he is across the line of scrimmage and in contact with his antagonist. It is as if the snap signal set off a charge of dynamite inside him. The explosion of his charge gives him initial advantage over his opponent and enables him to move big, powerful men for whom he might be no match in a game of push-and-pull.

He may use the *step charge* or the *lunge charge*. The step charge is popular and has less margin for error than the lunge, which has more initial punch if properly executed. For the average lineman, the step charge is definitely recommended.

In using the step charge, the lineman simply steps out of his stance (without raising up) with the foot opposite the shoulder he intends to use in blocking. Contact should be made with the shoulder as the lead foot takes hold. Driving off the planted foot, he brings the other leg up quickly and follows through with short digging steps.

Saying it another way, on his first step the blocker gets a position of advantage; then he immediately closes on his opponent in the prescribed manner.

An exception to this standard pattern must be stressed. It is the *quick block* popular with T formation teams, in which the object is to get contact as quickly as possible and knock the op-

ponent off balance. As the blocker is not concerned with moving his man any appreciable distance, he is going to follow the most direct path to him without much regard for the position of his own body on contact. This means he will take a quick step directly toward the opponent with his *near* foot and hit him sharply with the shoulder on that same side. (Instead of moving blockers into position, most T teams use switchoff signals which transfer the assignment to another player. See Chapter 7.)

In the lunge charge the body is propelled across the line and into contact ahead of the legs, which must be immediately recoiled and brought up under the body with feet well spread and digging as in the step charge. Again the foot opposite the blocking shoulder should be farthest advanced at contact.

An all-fours charge may be developed out of either of these methods, which hits lower and is harder to slide around but is less mobile and, generally speaking, less desirable than a charge that keeps a man on his feet ready to meet any and all situations.

## SHOULDER BLOCKS

Points to be considered in discussing shoulder blocks include:

1. Specific purpose of the block: whether the opponent is to be moved backward or laterally or merely shunted out of the route he wants to pursue.
2. How and where to get contact.
3. Position of body on contact.
4. Follow-up.

When the object is to move an opponent, most coaches will put two men on him. (The T formation, with its one-on-one blocking, offers an exception to this general rule.) Moving an opponent backward is nearly always a two-man job. Two-on-one blocking brings in timing and teamwork factors that will be discussed in Chapter 3, "Offensive Line Play." Right now our object is to analyze the action of a single player executing a shoulder block.

## GETTING CONTACT

Although the shoulder blocker's contact point is, naturally, the shoulder, it is not the *point* of the shoulder. It is the entire shoulder surface, the neck and the side of the head. These surfaces must be applied flush with the opponent's body. A shoulder-point contact has little power, is easily broken and invites injury to the shoulder.

The blocker's target is generally his opponent's belt-buckle. Aiming the *head* instead of the shoulder will cut down on his margin of error.

He usually will hit with the shoulder consonant with the movement desired: if to the left, left shoulder; if to the right, right shoulder. Another way to remember this important point is: Keep your head between your opponent and the ball. (Certain exceptions to this rule will be encountered from time to time; note, for example, the T formation "quick block" described above or the reverse shoulder block discussed below.)

As already described, the blocker goes for his man with a hard, low charge—hard because he must overcome the other's weight and momentum; low because he must get under the opponent's hands and, when he has established contact, be in position to carry him out with a lifting action.

The quick dip of the shoulder under the opponent's hands and then up into his midsection will help the blocker get contact with a hand-fighter.

The head is up and the eyes are on the target. Blocking is no game of blindman's buff.

A picture of a well-executed shoulder block, snapped at the instant of contact, will show the blocker with:

1. Leg opposite blocking shoulder thrust forward, back leg ready to drive under opponent, feet well apart with toes turned slightly in, body definitely slanted forward but with feet well under and balance retained.

2. Shoulder slammed into opponent's midsection, flush from point to neck and with side of neck and head flush against opponent's side.

3. Back straight, tail low, feet and body squared away.

A word should be said here of the disposition of the hands in blocking. As long as the hands and forearm are not touching the opponent, the blocker will not be guilty of illegal use of hands on offense. If the hands or forearm, or both, do come in contact with the opponent, then the hands must be kept tight against the chest. Players should be taught to grasp their jersey fronts with both hands as a precaution against fouling.

In the typical shoulder block, only the shoulder and the extension of the shoulder formed by the lifted upper arm are in contact with the opponent. Either or both hands may hang free from the blocker's body. It is permissible and often desirable for the hand opposite the blocking shoulder to be dropped to the ground to maintain balance.

#### KEEPING CONTACT

Once proper contact has been made, the job is only half done. Now the blocker must (1) keep contact, (2) move his man in the desired direction and (3) keep his body between the opponent and the path of the ball.

As we have said, the drive is (1) forward and (2) upward. The object is to lift the opponent, depriving him of traction and making him easy to move out of the play. The lifting action is especially helpful in moving a man backward.

The blocker presses his contact aggressively and persistently, with short, powerful, digging steps, with feet well-spread and up under the body. The charge, the contact and the follow-up are all one vigorous, continuous action, with an extra wallop at the instant of contact. He must keep on his feet and keep driving!



## WORDS OF CAUTION

Tactics, tricks and maneuvers the blocker must expect a capable opponent to use against him will be brought out in detail in a later chapter on defensive play, but at this time it is well to say to the blocker:

1. Unless your blocking charge is hard and vicious, the opponent will overpower you and shove you back into the ball-carrier's path.

2. If you lunge blindly and out of control, he will shove you aside or into the ground.

3. If your charge is too high, he may bowl you over with his own shoulder or fight you off with his hands and move into the ball-carrier's path; if too low, he may reach or climb over you and make the tackle.

4. If you do not establish firm and proper contact, he will slip off your shoulder and be in position to make the tackle.

5. If you do not follow up after contact with short, digging steps, lifting him and moving him in the desired direction and keeping your body between him and the ball, he will break away and be in position to stop the play, if not for a loss, for a short gain when otherwise it might have gone for a touchdown.

6. When employing the shoulder block in the secondary or after pulling out of line, if you do not time your advance so as to "meet the opponent at the crossroads," you will be ineffective. A common error is to throw the block from too far away. Run *through* the opponent.

7. If you don't want to block, you can't. Blocking is 75 per cent desire.

## REVERSE SHOULDER BLOCK

This is a shoulder block with an element of deception, in that the opponent is struck with the opposite shoulder from the one he is expecting. Ends find this a handy block on tackles play-

ing to their inside—and will find the enemy using it on them if they penetrate too deeply on defense. Except for the feint with the normal blocking shoulder and the reverse, it is executed in the same manner as the regular shoulder block.

#### SIDESWIPE

Another good inside block for an end is the *sideswipe*, which is simply a shoulder block which contacts the opponent from the side instead of the front. (A cross-body block applied from the side may also be used for this purpose and is also called a sideswipe.)

#### PIVOT BLOCK

Blocking problems vary with the defensive positions taken by opponents, as well as the offensive play. We have said that the shoulder block is useful for moving a man either backward or laterally. But suppose the opponent is already out of the path of the play and you are assigned to see that he stays out. For example, let's suppose you are a lineman, that the play is coming just inside your position and the man you are assigned to block is playing well to your outside. You don't have to move him out—he's already out. The problem is to see that he doesn't work over into the ball-carrier's charted path.

The probability is that the opponent, not knowing where the play is designed to hit, will make his initial charge straight across the line of scrimmage or at a slight angle to the inside. It is not necessary to stop this charge; in fact, a skillful blocker will merely assist the charger in carrying himself out of the play.

Approved technique is for the blocker to drop his outside foot to the rear, pivoting sidewise at the same time, and calculating the opponent's charge so as to hit him with the outside shoulder. By keeping contact and maneuvering his feet properly while ap-

plying pressure, the blocker jockeys the defensive man out of the danger area.

#### OPEN-AND-SHUT BLOCK

Sometimes the opponent's position will offer a more serious problem. Your assignment may be to block to the *inside* a man who is playing to your *outside*, or vice versa. This is one of the most difficult tasks a blocker can draw. (How ball-carriers and decoys can draw opponents into favorable blocking position will be discussed in Chapter 4, "The Run.")

If the man you must block to the *inside* is playing off your *outside* shoulder, obviously the first problem is to get position to his outside. The first move is a step parallel to or a bit back of the line of scrimmage with the outside foot. The opponent likely will try to charge through the hole you have opened by moving out. As he moves in, you drive back into his flank with the inside shoulder, off the outside foot. As in the pivot block, his momentum will help you complete the assignment. This block is often called the "open-and-shut" because you first open the door and then shut it in his face.

Another method of blocking bad-position opponents takes advantage of the defensive player's aggressive reaction to pressure. The blocker moves as if to apply a regular shoulder block that would take the defender in the opposite direction to the one actually desired. Very likely the defensive man will fight vigorously against such a block. The blocker then whirls (reverse pivot) and throws his hips hard against the defender from the *other* side, thus putting his body between the potential tackler and the play.

#### SLIDE OR COVER BLOCK

Often a lineman will have to fill up a hole created when his neighbor pulled out to lead a play or perform some other as-

signment. If an opponent attempts to go through the hole, the offensive lineman moves laterally to block his path, keeping his feet well under him and his body between the opponent and the ball, using his shoulder in the prescribed manner. This lateral movement must be made with catlike speed and balance. Some coaches call this block a *shoulder check*. The cross-body block is also used for this purpose.

#### STATIONARY BLOCK

The term *stationary block* is a general one, covering those assignments in which the purpose is to protect specified territory rather than to open a hole. Examples are seen in the protection of a punter or passer.

Because he is responsible for keeping opponents out of a certain area, the stationary blocker does not leave his post to go after an opponent. At the same time he will not stand stock-still and let the other side run over him. Often in the line a blocker will find it advantageous to move aggressively against the defensive player with a short jab step accompanied by a shoulder nudge, a straightaway butt with the head or a broad-side contact with arms across chest. (See the section "Getting Contact," page 13, for a warning regarding illegal use of the hands.)

This forward move serves to absorb the opponent's charge, straighten him up or throw him off line. The blocker can then retreat, catlike, to his protective position and use his shoulder to ward off the opponent's second charge.

Blockers protecting passers and kickers must guard against being pulled out of position by an opponent attempting to open up a lane for a teammate.

#### BRUSH AND SCREEN BLOCKS

Often an offensive player has two assignments on the same

play—first, to check or screen an opponent momentarily, and second, to go on down the field for another block, to cover a punt or to receive a pass.

Check blocks are usually executed with the shoulder, the blocker stepping into the opponent in the prescribed manner, keeping contact momentarily, forcing him away from the play and then breaking downfield.

Quick-opening plays, particularly off the T formation, rely heavily on screen or brush blocks against opponents who do not need to be moved but merely interfered with until the ball is safely past. The opponent is bumped with the shoulder or head, the blocker keeping momentarily between him and the ball.

Sometimes the purpose is well served by the broadside block described above, in which the opponent is straightened up and both his progress and his view of the play are blocked for the necessary interval. This type is often called a "shield block."

#### LAST RESORT BLOCKS

The shoulder-blocker's best-laid plans are bound to go awry now and then. When that happens, he should call out the reserves—the knees and legs.

If the opponent slides off your shoulder, throw your near knee between his legs. Follow up by throwing your hips sideways and snapping your head against him. The combined pressure of your knee and body will hold him and perhaps throw him to the ground.

If the opponent "submarines," getting too low for you to use your shoulder on him, he will be hard to move but you can neutralize him by driving both knees into him and "smothering" him by falling across his body.

The primary assignment is to keep between the opponent and the ball, and all legal means should be called upon to achieve that end. But *don't hold*.

Don't use your hands on a defensive man, even as a desperate



last resort on the outside chance that an official won't see you. Play by the rules.

## CROSS-BODY BLOCKS

### MECHANICS

Let's visualize a situation in which the opponent to be blocked is outside the proposed path of the ball but is on his feet, under control and ready to move over and cut the play off. He might be a line-backer coming over to plug a hole we have opened in the defensive line; he might be an end whom we want to keep out of an off-tackle play.

You must take him alone. You can do a very effective job by "building a fence" between him and the ball with a well-executed *cross-body block*.

As the name implies, in this block you interpose your body between the defensive man and the ball. The mechanics are uncomplicated. Closing in on the opponent as if to run through him, throw your body across his thighs snapping your hips, knee and upper leg hard against him. At the instant of contact your head will be on one side of the opponent and your inside knee will be hooking him on the other. You will be driving off your outside leg.

If you have put sufficient snap into the block or caught him by surprise, he will go to the ground. More often the opponent will retain his feet and fight hard to get around you and into the play. Anticipating this, you will have landed on hands and feet in a bridge-like position. It is necessary now to keep contact, keep your back high and keep hunching sidewise, crab fashion, to sustain your block and stay between him and the ball.

**DON'T GO TO THE GROUND.** Keep on your hands and feet and keep contact until the ball-carrier is safely past.

The cross-body block is a useful alternate to the shoulder check in filling up holes left by players pulling out of the line.

#### REVERSE CROSS-BODY BLOCK

An effective variation to the regular cross-body block is the *reverse cross-body*. The blocker pivots and executes the cross-body block with his head pointing in the direction of his own goal. In other words, he "swaps ends" as compared with the regular cross-body. This block has deception value, in that the defensive man is given reason to believe that you are going to pass him up for a deeper defender. Instead you whirl back across his path and against his thighs, the contact itself being as described above.

The reverse cross-body block can be particularly useful to keep an opponent from doubling back into a play that is passing behind him. It is also admirably adapted to blocking *in* an end who is charging at a sharp angle.

#### IN THE SECONDARY

Another blocking chore is to cut down or ward off a defensive man in the secondary. The proper execution of a down-field block often means the difference between a modest gain and a touchdown.

Depending on the circumstances, the blocker will attempt to take out the defender with a running shoulder block or a running cross-body block, merely get between him and the ball-carrier and slow him down, or cut him down with a *rolling block*. The last should not be used except when the defensive man is moving diagonally or directly toward the blocker and has no time or opportunity to change his route. It is executed by throwing the entire body into his path, driving off the outside foot, at the same time rolling into him and aiming to hit him at the knees with the hips.

Unless the blocker "has the bead" on the defender as described, he would do much better to use a moving block that will enable him to keep on his feet and try again if the first effort is unsuccessful.

The roll block will never be effective against a defensive man who is backing up, giving ground and attempting to maneuver the ball-carrier to the sideline or slow him down. The blocker's cue against such a defender is to pursue him as closely as possible, trying to get between him and the ball-carrier. Either the ball-carrier can break around him, using the blocker for a shield, or the defender will have to try for the tackle. When he commits himself by moving for the ball-carrier, the blocker is in position to cut him down.

If a defensive man is chasing your ball-carrier and you are the third man in the race, there isn't a thing you can do except try to overtake the opponent and get alongside of or in front of him. **DON'T CLIP!** It's illegal, it's dangerous and, in most instances, it's plain silly. Your boy has a good chance to score, anyway; he has none if you commit a foul.

Many a touchdown is called back for clipping that would have scored if an overanxious blocker had been content to let well enough alone. We have spoken of the shoulder, the trunk, the hips and the legs as important blocking weapons; we don't want to overlook the head.

#### BLOCKING PRACTICE

Various blocking devices, from simple dummies to complicated patented machines, are on the market. Almost all of them may be used to advantage in training players to block. The blocking dummy is especially helpful in teaching and learning correct form.

But, in the end, there is no substitute for the moving, live target. The coach should see that his players are properly pro-

tected, that they know the rudiments of blocking and evading blocks, and that they are in physical condition to withstand a few hard knocks. Then they should be allowed to practice what they have been taught under conditions similar to those they will encounter on the playing field.

### 3

## *Offensive Line Play*

A DISCUSSION of offensive line play is a natural and easy transition from individual blocking to the composite running game. In this chapter we will stress the actions of the offensive line on running plays, leaving for later chapters the analysis of its performance on passes and kicks.

As noted in the preceding chapter, the blocking assignment may be to move an opponent (1) backward or (2) laterally. Also, we said that in most cases (except in the T formation) two offensive men will work against one defensive man at or near the point of attack.

### DOUBLE TEAMING

If the assignment is to move an opponent backward (for example, a guard and a tackle on the defensive guard), the blockers work shoulder to shoulder in a manner known as *double teaming*. In simplest terms, this action consists of two shoulder blocks applied simultaneously.

The defender is pinched between the heads of the team blockers, lifted and carried to the rear. The blockers must not allow themselves to be split apart. This type of block will be used principally on short-yardage downs.

On the enemy goal-line, when only a yard or two is needed,



the team blockers will have no thought except to move the defender back. In downfield situations, experienced blockers will consider the possibility that the "short-gainer" might be turned into a longer run. To that end, the primary straight-ahead surge may flow into pivoting movement. The blocker on the side nearest the ball-carrier's path will apply added pressure, thus developing a combined moving and turning action that resembles the "lead and post" block for creating lateral openings.

Given that added opening, the ball-carrier may be able to spring into the clear or at least give the defensive line-backer a real job to do. This type of play will not put an interference leader in front of the ball-carrier, so the possibility of a long gain depends more on the ball-carrier's ability to seize upon a breakaway opportunity than on any planned maneuver.

#### LEAD AND POST BLOCKING

To create a "hole" in the defensive line at the point of attack, the *lead and post* blocking principle is most often employed. The lead and post team consists of two blockers whose assignment is to move one opponent *laterally*.

The "lead" blocker will be the one nearest the point of attack and will do the turning. The "post" blocker will be his teammate to the side of the desired movement and will check the forward progress of the opponent.

Let's study the actions of one of these blocking teams—one whose assignment is to move an opponent to the blockers' right. A left-side team, of course, would perform the same movement in reverse.

Each blocker makes contact simultaneously, but after that their actions differ. The lead blocker, in this case, cracks into the opponent with his right shoulder in the regular shoulder block with the left foot advanced. He is the man assigned to apply the pressure that will turn the opponent to the right.

The post blocker may use (1) a left shoulder block or (2) a

crotch block, executed by driving his head into the opponent's crotch and dropping to a four-point position with his left foot advanced. In either case, he will get slightly lower contact than the lead blocker, who has slammed his shoulder into the opponent's mid-section.

Instantly both blockers will shift their feet toward the hole, placing themselves in position to drive the opponent away from the point of attack. The turning pressure is exerted by the lead blocker. The post blocker prevents the opponent from breaking across the line to the lead blocker's outside and at the same time helps lift the opponent as the lead blocker turns him. Together they carry him to the right and out of the play.

When holes are opened laterally in this manner, one or more interference runners must lead the ball-carrier through the opening to handle the line-backers.

#### CHECK BLOCKING

The offensive line problem created when a lineman pulls out into the interference was touched on in the previous chapter. As mentioned there, the slide block or shoulder check may be used by the blocker plugging the gap; it entails a quick lateral movement and the use of the shoulder to stave off any attempt of an opponent to crash through the momentarily unprotected spot.

The cross-body block also may be employed with good results in this situation. Usually the check blocker will make the defensive man commit himself and then use whatever type of block seems indicated or that he is able to apply under the circumstances. If the situation clearly calls for a check block (that is, if there is no opponent in position to charge through the check blocker's own territory), the offensive lineman can move more aggressively and meet the defender with a shoulder block. Generally speaking, the check blocker is in the position of making the other fellow show his hand first.

Check blocking is vital to the success of an offense. It calls for agility and quick thinking on the part of the player who performs it.

#### BLOCKING THE TACKLE

In plays from a wingback formation the offensive end and wingback often work together on the defensive tackle. The blocking problems here differ somewhat from those of strictly in-line blocking and warrant special mention in this discussion of offensive line play, even though, strictly speaking, the end is not a typical lineman.

When the end and wingback are set in offensive position, the wingback ordinarily will be a yard to the end's outside and a yard back. When he is in proper position, the wingback's hand on the ground will be in line with the heels of the end.

The defensive tackle to be blocked, either in or out, may be playing (1) between the end and wingback, (2) in front of the wingback or (3) in front of or inside the end. If the tackle is inside the end, it will not be feasible or necessary for the wingback to participate in the blocking. If the tackle is to be taken in, the end can do it alone with a shoulder block, a reverse shoulder block or a reverse body block. An end cannot be expected to take *out* a tight-playing tackle; this possible situation is one to be considered in drafting a play, and an alternative blocking plan provided.

Another situation that a good blocking end can handle alone occurs when the tackle to be taken *out* is playing well to his outside. In this case, as above, the wingback will be released for downfield blocking. If the tackle is an unusually strong defensive player, however, the wingback will stick around and help the end.

Let's consider more carefully the situations in which lead and post blocking by the end and wingback are clearly indicated. First we will think of the defensive tackle who is playing off

the end's outside shoulder and who needs to be taken *out*.

In this case the wingback is the post and the end is the lead. The end must, as a preliminary move, get position to the tackle's *inside*. He does this by quickly moving the inside foot *in and forward*. This gives him position to apply a straight shoulder block that will turn the defensive tackle to the outside while the wingback acts as the post. The wingback attains post position by moving the inside foot *forward and in*.

If the tackle playing over the end is to be taken *in*, the assignments are reversed; the end executes the post block and the wingback, stepping *first* with the *inside* foot and then with the outside, secures position and applies the turning block with his inside shoulder.

When the defensive tackle is playing in front of the wingback and is to be taken *in*, the end must move quickly to the outside and get in front of the tackle in order to apply his post block. The wingback must get outside position by moving, first, his inside foot to the *outside and forward* and, next, his outside foot in the same direction. Then he applies the driving and turning pressure with his inside shoulder. The end-wingback team's choice of strategy when the wide-playing tackle must be taken *out* already has been discussed.

A smart end can help set up the defensive tackle for any desired block by varying the "split" between himself and the teammate to his inside, but he must be careful not to fall into any lining-up habits that will provide the opposition with a tip-off.

## PULLING OUT

In describing the lineman's stance, we noted that he must be able to move quickly and under control in any direction—backward and laterally as well as forward. Tackles, guards and even centers are frequently called on to pull out of line and move to another area with speed and precision. The pulling lineman

may be assigned to lead the interference, trap an opposing player who has been deliberately allowed to cross the line of scrimmage, take part in protecting the passer or punter, or even to carry the ball.

The two most popular methods of pulling out of the line are the *step-out* and the *cross-over*.

Let's study the actions of a lineman pulling out and going to his right, using the *step-out*. All in one quick movement he will:

1. Step *diagonally backward* with his right foot.
2. Pivot his body to the right, without rising.
3. Drive off the left foot, push off the hand on the ground and swing the free arm to aid his pivot.

This type of pull-out has been found most satisfactory in our coaching experience.

This same player using the *cross-over* would:

Simultaneously pivot and drive off his right foot.

Cross over with the left foot.

In this type of pull-out, it is important that the pivot be pronounced enough that the cross-over step will clear a teammate on the line. In either type, guards pulling out and crossing behind the center will need to get depth enough to clear him in case he is shoved backward as he passes the ball.

Points to remember in executing either the cross-over or the step-out include:

1. Don't tip off your intention.
  2. Keep the body low in pivoting.
  3. Gauge the depth of the initial step by the requirements of the play (as to whether you are going deep or parallel to the scrimmage line).
  4. Make the first step short.
  5. Move out fast and attain top controlled speed quickly.
  6. Stay under control, ready to block the first opponent who shows up in your path.
  7. As the point of attack is approached, start turning upfield.
- Lengthy practice and appropriate drills in pulling out are in-

licated for all linemen. It is particularly important that the initial movement out of the line be practiced until it is instantaneous, smooth and instinctive.

#### CENTER PLAY

The offensive center rates special attention because he has a unique and important duty: He launches every play with a between-the-legs pass.

His first assignment is to make a perfect pass to the proper teammate. His second is to participate in the blocking.

Except in the T formation, the center snaps the ball back to a teammate stationed from one to twelve yards behind the line of scrimmage. The T center makes a "blind pass" that is actually a handoff to the quarterback or "up man." Even he must be prepared, however, to make a long snapback on deep punt formation.

A center in the wingback or punt formations uses a *spiral pass* of varying speed, direction and height. To execute this pass the center takes a comfortably spread stance with his weight on the balls of his feet. His feet are adjusted, in relation to the line of scrimmage, so that he has perfect balance when he reaches out and grips the ball as it lies on the ground. He puts no weight on the ball.

A right-handed center places his right hand on the side of the ball near the front tip, with fingers spread and reaching somewhat under the ball. This is the hand that will furnish the power for the pass. If the ball is slick, he gets this hand well under it. The left hand acts almost solely as a guide. It is placed at the side and rear of the ball, fingers spread and resting slightly over the top. Both thumbs should be parallel to the seams of the ball.

As the ball is snapped back, both hands should follow through; otherwise the pass may be pulled off line.

The center must develop and practice several different types



of passes and become consistent in their execution. His backs will be expecting a certain kind of pass on each play, as to speed, lead and height, and they must get what they are looking for. Inconsistent center passing begets fumbling.

He must be certain to pass to the proper side of the ball-handler on a handoff or fake handoff.

The center's longest, strongest pass will be to the tailback in deep punt formation. This deep punt pass must travel fast and true to the kicker's hip on the kicking side (unless he personally prefers it elsewhere). This pass will be as hard as the center can make it, to cut down on the time involved in getting off the punt.

An *intermediate pass*, to backs four or five yards behind the line of scrimmage, must be learned in two phases: (1) direct to the receiver's position and (2) with a "lead," i.e., timed to reach a certain spot as the receiver does.

For backs closer to the line there must be a *soft pass*, and this one, too, has a variation in which the center "hangs the ball in the air" for a back coming in fast to hit the line.

Still another type of pass is that made on a place-kick attempt. This pass must spiral back low, fast and true to the hands of the holder, about seven yards behind the line of scrimmage.

In addition to his problems of mechanics, speed, direction and height, the center has a problem of timing. He must get the ball away on the proper count. A center who passes the ball off the signal-caller's cadence will either encourage his teammates to jump offside or deprive them of their deserved advantage over the opposition in knowing exactly when the ball is to be snapped. The center and quarterback should practice together on counting and passing in cadence. This is especially important on the *blind pass* of the T formation.

The blind pass is usually executed with one hand, although both may be used. The center usually takes a somewhat higher stance than for the spiral pass, with his passing hand gripping

the ball as for the spiral but with the opposite forearm resting across the knee. His head is up, eyes to the front.

The quarterback or "up man" takes a stance close behind the center and places one hand, palm down, against the center's crotch. The "pass" itself is merely a quick, sharp lift of the ball so that the rear point is shoved into the quarterback's hand, or, as many quarterbacks now prefer, so that the ball is placed in his hand with long axis parallel to the line of scrimmage. In the latter instance, the ball is already shaped for forward passing.

The "one-handed" T formation center must be able, on occasion, to execute an accurate snapback of four or five yards with one hand and without looking back. Such a pass would be necessary when the ball is not to be handled by the quarterback, as on a quick-kick. Some coaches prefer a lower stance and a two-handed blind pass, to give the center more straight striking power.

From his head-up stance the T formation center is as well prepared as any other lineman to take part in the blocking. Not so with the head-down two-handed passer; yet he must carry out certain assignments in addition to his snapper-back chores. Before concentrating on the latter, he must take a quick look around to spot the defensive players in front of or near him. His primary assignment is to make a perfect pass and he should never let other considerations interfere.

As the snap is made, unless he is (1) pulling out to protect the passer or lead interference or (2) breaking into the secondary to block or to cover a punt, he should drop quickly to a four-point stance. From that position he can resist pressure from an opponent playing directly in front of him or move in any direction with balance and control.

## *The Running Game*

THE RUN IS a basic weapon in any offense. A team that can go on the ground is a tough, hard-blocking team. It does not fear rain, wind or cold, and it is usually a good defensive team.

For a strong running attack a team must have:

1. Good blocking.
2. An aggressive attitude.
3. Speed.
4. Power.
5. Deception.
6. Timing and co-ordination.

Its plays will be numerous enough to meet the different defensive situations it may encounter. These plays must be well-designed and well-timed, and they must fit together so that the team's assets of speed, power and deception may be utilized to full advantage.

In speaking of the run, we are not forgetting the pass. These great branches of the offense complement each other. When you strengthen one, you automatically strengthen the other. On the football field they flow together and become The Attack. They are no longer separate entities but merely different manifestations of the scoring scheme.

## TYPES OF RUNS

Irrespective of the formation used, all football teams have running plays of three general types: (1) direct or quick-opening plays, (2) sweeps and cutbacks, (3) delayed plays.

In *direct plays* the ball-carrier aims for the point of attack with a minimum of delay. Usually he receives the snapback from center and follows the most direct route to the hole. Straight-ahead plunges and slants are direct plays. So are the fast-hitting "quicks" off the T formation, even though the quarterback hands the ball to the carrier. The direct play is primarily a short-yardage effort, with added assurance that it isn't likely to lose any ground.

*Sweeps* and *cutbacks* are akin to direct plays, in that there is no delay and no fancy ball-handling in their execution. However, they involve a longer interval between the snap of the ball and the crossing of the scrimmage line, and also a change or changes in direction. Smart teams and smart runners will make their cutbacks and sweeps look alike as long as possible. They will also be proficient in the execution of the "in-and-out," which threatens a cutback and turns into a sweep, and the "out-and-in," which develops conversely.

A *delayed play* is one that is deliberately slow in getting the ball to the point of attack. This slower development enables the attacking team to mobilize extra interference, or to deceive the opposition, or both. Reverses and fake reverses, spinner plays, split bucks and lateral and fake lateral passes are common varieties of delayed plays. The delayed play requires fine timing, clever ball-handling and sharp, skillful blocking; it may require less muscle than the more direct assault.

## BLOCKING POSITION

In discussing blocking, we stressed the necessity of first attaining *blocking position*. Plays should be designed to give the

blockers as much advantage as possible in carrying out their assignments. The ideal would be for each blocker to have "natural position" to begin with; that is, blockers assigned to carry opponents *out* would find these opponents playing to their outside, and vice versa.

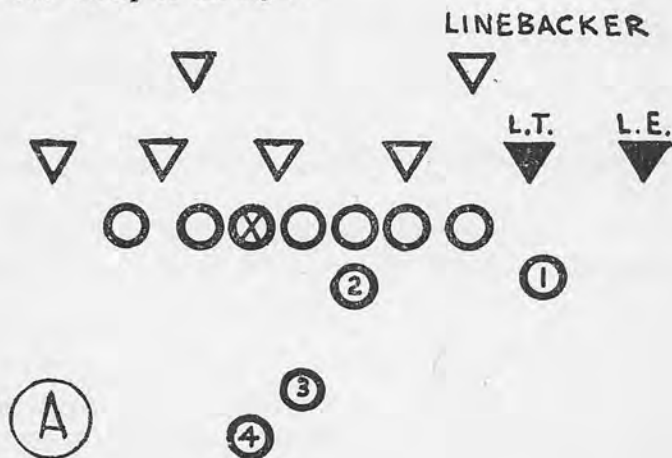
Often a favorable situation does exist, but certainly not always. In this day of shifting defenses, it would be impossible to design even the simplest sort of play that would assure us of natural blocking advantage in every case.

If the blocker's original position is only slightly off the one desired, we have explained how he can achieve the latter by quick footwork. Thus an end moves diagonally forward, right or left, to obtain the desired position on a tackle playing in front of him.

If the natural advantage definitely favors the defense, it means either that the play is poorly designed or that the play-plan includes some maneuver to draw the defense into positions favorable to the blockers.

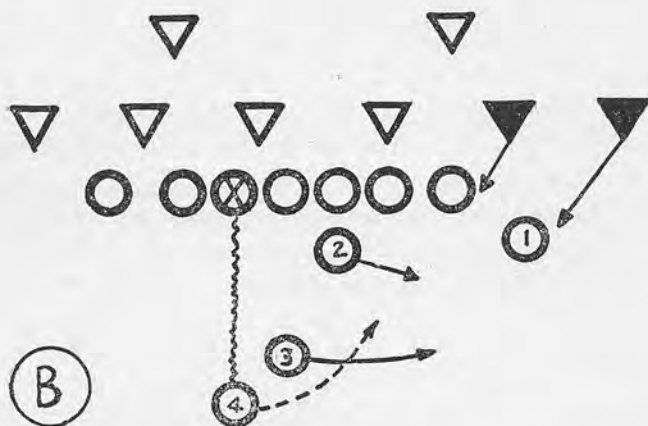
That something may be the action of the runner, the action of a decoy, the ball-hiding and faking of a spinner back or a combination of these.

Let's consider an example. Suppose that the play is an "in-and-out" sweep to the right.



The pre-play situation is shown in Chart A. The ball is to go to the No. 4 back, who is expected to carry it around his own right end. Obviously he is going to have to get outside of the defensive left tackle and left end. One way to handle the tackle would be for the offensive right end and wingback (No. 1) to use the lead-and-post method on him, but such strategy would leave no one in position to block the linebacker. Besides, a quick attack on the tackle by the wingback would immediately alert the defensive end and line-backer to the fact that an outside-tackle play was shaping up.

And even if the tackle were boxed in by brute strength, the defensive end would still be well to the outside of all the blockers.



Note in Chart B how the preliminary movements of the ball-carrier and two of his blockers are calculated to solve the problem.

The No. 4 back takes the center pass and starts as if to plunge off his own right tackle. The No. 2 and No. 3 backs move out as if to double-team on the defensive left end and drive him out. The defensive tackle and end, observing these maneuvers, react to the inside to jam up the expected off-tackle play.



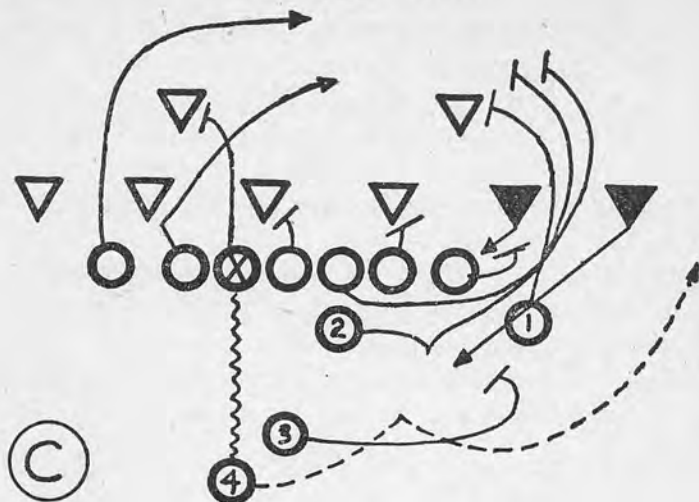


Chart C shows the payoff. The No. 2 back swerves away from the end and heads up the field. The No. 3 back takes the end *in*, probably with a reverse cross-body block, and the ball-carrier suddenly swings out and around him. The No. 1 back has gone through after the line-backer, and the offensive right end uses his shoulder on the defensive tackle as the latter tries to recover from his momentary mistake.

#### BLOCKING THE END

One method of handling a defensive end on a running play has just been noted—the fake to take him *out*, followed by a block to take him *in*.

The converse of that method is obvious: One player may fake to take him *in*, then another will take him *out*.

Also illustrated was one of the most potent aids in blocking an end—deceptive feinting on part of the ball-carrier.

Direct methods of blocking an end are (1) one man blocking him with shoulder or body, often with the reverse twist, and (2) two men double-teaming on him.

## DELAYED PLAYS

A *spinner play*, in which the ball goes to a back who hides it from the opposition while executing a full or partial spin, has the effect of (1) holding the defensive players in place while they try to locate the ball, or better still (2) sending them on a wild goose chase after a player who does not have the ball.

The spinner back may (1) hand the ball to a teammate; (2) fake handing off the ball to one teammate and hand it to another; (3) fake to one or more teammates, then carry the ball himself; (4) fake a handoff, then flip a backward pass to another teammate, or (5) fake a handoff, drop back and throw a forward pass.

A sequence showing some of the possibilities of the spinner is shown in Chart 21, page 101. Mechanics of the spinner back are discussed later in this chapter under "Backfield Techniques."

A *reverse* is, quite plausibly, a play that starts in one direction and winds up going the opposite way. It is calculated to cause opponents to move in the wrong direction, thus "setting them up" for the blockers. The reverse entails a ball exchange between two players in motion, execution of which is described under "Backfield Techniques." It is closely akin to the spinner handoff to a wingback; in fact, the latter is usually called a reverse.

On a *split buck* the ball is faked to one back going into the line and handed to another criss-crossing behind him. Executed with precision, this type of play takes advantage of the defense's momentary reaction toward another threatened point of attack.

## BACKFIELD TECHNIQUES

## BACKFIELD STANCE

Coaches' ideas differ as to the most desirable backfield stance, but most of them prefer one of these three: upright, semi-

upright, three-point. Or some desirable combination may be worked out, as: tailback in upright stance, fullback in semi-upright, frontback and wingback in three-point (in single wingback formation).

*Upright.*—The back spreads his feet parallel and comfortably wide, usually about 18 inches, with weight equally distributed on the balls of his feet. The knees are slightly bent and the hands rest on them, arms straight.

*Semi-upright.*—Also a two-point stance, with knees well bent and forearms resting across them, hands open and palms up.

*Three-point.*—This stance is similar to a lineman's three-point stance, with feet even and one hand on the ground. It is sometimes called a sprinter's stance.

#### BALL-HANDLING

In the broad sense, *ball-handling* includes receiving passes and catching punts and kickoffs. Here the emphasis is on receiving the ball from center and on handing it to or receiving it from another player, but whenever the ball and the player's hands are involved certain rules apply:

- (1) Keep your eye on the ball until you *know* you have it.
- (2) Keep your fingers relaxed as the ball is taken; avoid tenseness.
- (3) Catch the ball with an easy, flowing motion, the hands "giving" with it as in baseball.
- (4) Carry the ball properly and guard it against the clutches of "ball stealers" and while falling.

The ball-carrier puts the ball away by tucking it inside the arm with one point jammed into the armpit and the opposite point grasped with well-spread fingers. Pressure of hand, forearm, elbow and biceps keeps the ball snug against the body.

When driving into the line, when tackled or when lunging for extra yardage, the ball-carrier protects the ball by covering it with his other hand.

## SHIFTING THE BALL

Generally speaking, the ball should be carried under the "off" arm, on the side farthest from the nearest opponent. As circumstances dictate, the ball-carrier shifts the ball to the opposite arm by sliding it across his body with both hands grasping the front point.

The ball should not be shifted when a tackle appears imminent. In case of doubt, it is better to keep the ball tucked away than to risk a fumble.

A lost fumble is one of the most disastrous plays in football. Aside from the psychological effect and the loss of opportunity to score, it actually costs the fumbler's team many yards. For example, a fumble lost on the 50-yard line can be said to have cost the fumbling team about 80 yards—the combined lengths of the punt it might have made and the punt its opponent can now make.

## RECOVERING THE BALL

When a fumble does occur, caution is usually the better part of valor. Unless the fumbler or a nearby teammate is positive he can pick up the ball and make headway with it, he should fall on it.

To pick up the ball, a player gets low by taking a long step, bends down, scoops it up with one hand and immediately uses the other hand to get and retain possession of it.

"Falling on the ball" is an art that linemen, as well as backs, must master. Linemen often have occasion to cover an opponent's fumble or blocked punt. Actually one should not *fall* on the ball; very likely it would squirt away. Instead, hit the ground close to the ball on hip and side and *slide into* the ball. The ball is hugged close with both hands. As further protection and precaution against injury, the knees should be drawn up and the shoulders and head pulled down. Literally wrap your-

self around that football! It is the most valuable object on the field.

#### HANDLING THE BALL ON REVERSES

To exchange the ball when one or both players are in motion, a good method is as follows: The original carrier places the ball on his hip, point out. The other man comes by and picks it off, as if out of the air, with his *inside* hand over the ball, palm down, and the *outside* hand under the ball, palm up. The second man quickly puts the ball away on his outside. Both men try to conceal the ball during the exchange so that opponents will be unable to ascertain quickly whether an exchange actually has taken place.

Another method is for the original carrier to hand off the ball *under his outside arm*. He must be careful to extend the ball far enough to clear his body on the outside; otherwise a fumble may result as the second man attempts to pick it off. Because of this danger, the first method is the more satisfactory.

#### RUNNING WITH THE BALL

*Starting*.—From his two- or three-point stance, with eyes on the ball or straight ahead (if he is not in position to receive the ball), the back must be prepared to start quickly forward, at an angle right or left, or parallel to the line of scrimmage, right or left.

In moving laterally his first step will be either a *cross-over* or a *direct step*. To execute the cross-over, he swings his "off" leg over the other and at the same time pivots on the ball of his "direction" foot. In the direct step, he moves first with the direction foot and pivots on the other.

For example, if he is to run to the left, his cross-over would be with the right leg and he would pivot on his left foot. If he

used the direct step, he would step with his left foot and pivot on the right.

For straight-ahead drives some coaches teach the *rocker step*, a short back step as the ball is received from center. This tactic is also useful when it is necessary for the ball-carrier to delay for an instant.

Whatever type of start is used, the ball-carrier should not overstride on his first two or three steps. For the sake of body balance and quick pickup, make the first step *short*.

*Running*.—A good ball-carrier is one who runs *hard, fast and cleverly*. Cleverness includes the ability to take advantage of interference and perform individual stunts to elude tacklers.

He keeps his head up and his eyes open.

He runs with high knee action and forward body balance.

He runs toward the opponents' goal line, not his own. He does not jig around behind the line of scrimmage but heads sharply for the point of attack.

He doesn't "pick his hole" but goes where the play directs. If the hole isn't there, he tries to make one or slides off into the clear, right or left.

He never quits digging until the whistle blows or he is on the ground. When trapped, he isn't afraid to lower his shoulder and drive for that extra yard. If tackled, he spins and churns in an effort to break away.

At close quarters in the line he uses powerful, digging steps; as he breaks into the secondary he lengthens his stride but remains prepared to change direction quickly and execute appropriate stunts.

## STUNTS

*Change of Pace*.—To elude a tackler in a broken field, the ball-carrier's best weapon is *speed*. Next best is the *change of pace*. Good runners are blessed with a sense of timing that en-



ables them to confuse tacklers by retarding or accelerating their pace. The change of pace usually is thought of as a momentary checking, then a quick burst of speed. The change does not have to be pronounced; it may not even be noticeable from the stands, but it will disrupt the tackler's timing.

The change of pace can be worked on an opponent approaching from the front, as well as from the side. It is a good idea for the ball-carrier to run directly at the would-be tackler. This tactic tends to "freeze" the tackler or make him commit himself to a straight-ahead course. Then with a sudden slight change of direction and burst of speed, the runner leaves him behind. (This stunt is stock-in-trade for the pass receiver—see Chapter 5.)

The habit of running directly at a lone defensive man, rather than trying to run away from him when he has the advantage, also sets him up for various stunts usually starting with a *side-step*.

*Side-step*.—The side-step is a quick lateral movement, sometimes aided by application of a stiff-arm. The ball-carrier attempting to side-step to the opponent's *right* carries or shifts the ball under his left arm. He offers the opponent his right leg as a target. As the opponent launches his tackle, the ball-carrier springs to the left.

There are several things the ball-carrier can do with the leg we have left dangling in the tackler's face. These include the *cross-over*, the *limp-leg*, the *double side-step* and the *reverse pivot*.

*Cross-over*.—As the ball-carrier springs to his left, as described above, he may cross over with his right leg, fade away from the tackler and break at a slight left angle from his original course.

The cross-over also can be an original stunt in itself. If the ball-carrier finds it expedient to move to his left but is too close to the tackler to advance his right foot and sidestep in the prescribed manner, he may simply change direction by crossing over the right leg.

This tactic is also used in *reversing the field*. A back cutting into the line uses the cross-over step. When he breaks through the line, another cross-over with the same leg will send him in the direction opposite to his start.

*Limp-leg.*—Let us say that the back who sidestepped to the left a moment ago didn't have running room to that side of the field. Perhaps he was on the sideline, or other opponents were approaching from that direction.

Timing his sidestep to the opponent's tackle, he lets the right leg go limp and swings it backward as far as he can. Chances are that a low-driving tackler will miss the target entirely or fail to grasp it firmly. Then the runner swings the "limp leg" around the tackler and proceeds in his original direction.

*Bringing Leg Behind.*—Instead of (1) crossing over with the right leg or (2) letting it go limp, the ball-carrier might have (3) brought it behind the left leg.

From that position he could now execute either the *double side-step* or the *reverse pivot*.

The double side-step is simply a second side-step in the same direction, in the form of a lateral hop. Then the runner continues in the original or a new direction.

In the reverse pivot, which would be very useful if the tackler had managed to secure a partial hold on him, he would make a full backward pivot on his right foot, swinging the left leg around and then continuing upfield.

*Stiff-arm.*—If speed, change of pace and the sidestep with its various follow-up stunts have failed to keep the runner out of contact with the tackler, he should apply the *stiff-arm*. This tactic may be co-ordinated with the stunts already described at close quarters. It has the double effect of shoving the tackler away and giving the ball-carrier a boost in the opposite direction.

The arm should be held low and close to the body until the runner is ready to apply the stiff-arm. At the proper instant he stiffens the arm, plants the heel of the hand on the tackler's

headgear or wherever he can get contact and shoves hard, at the same time swinging his legs and body out of the tackler's path.

*Final Efforts.*—If in spite of the runner's best stunts the tackler has caught him, he should attempt to jerk, whirl or spin out of his grasp. As a final gesture he should lunge and twist in an effort to make another yard, foot or inch and to fall forward. His thought in falling is to *protect the ball*.

The ball-carrier clutched by one foot or lower leg from the rear or side often can clear himself with a sharp upward jerk of that leg. The knee should be snapped up forcefully. This tactic is called a *hitch-kick*.

*Through the Line.*—As the ball-carrier bursts across the line of scrimmage, a line-backer is likely to loom up in his path. He should lower his head and shoulder and use his forearm and shoulder on the line-backer, then pivot or spin away.

If he has room and time, a quick shift of the ball and change of direction or sidestep accompanied by a stiff-arm may get him into the deep secondary. Feinting with eyes, head and feet is as important in football as in boxing. The good runner is able to employ this stratagem to advantage, even at close quarters.

*On the Sideline.*—A runner being forced to the sideline may (1) cut back into the field, using a cross-over; (2) fake to cut in, then swing out and go down the sideline, or (3) if the situation warrants, run out of bounds to stop the clock.

*Following Interference.*—The knack of utilizing one's blockers to the utmost is partly a natural asset and partly the result of experience and cool, quick thinking. It is difficult to give a rule, general or specific, for following interference. Leaving the interference too soon is a more common fault than staying with it too long. The best advice we can give in this regard is: Don't leave your interference as long as you have any.

(Speaking realistically, there is hardly such a thing as "staying with your interference too long." If the interference isn't blocking out the nearest tacklers, it isn't interference.)

*Decoying the Secondary.*—Blocking a fast, alert halfback in

the secondary is a tough assignment. At the same time, he must be prevented from coming up and spilling wide plays at or near the line of scrimmage.

Sweep plays should be designed so that an end or a wingback goes down on the halfback as a potential pass receiver, thus keeping him busy with his own problems until the play has had time to develop.

*Change of Direction.*—A quick veer to right or left is often part of the play-plan in line plunges. As mentioned earlier, any change of direction on the ball-carrier's part is likely to handicap the defense to some extent.

When a runner is being closely pursued by one opponent in the open field, he can usually gain clearance with an unexpected, even if slight, change of direction. The pursuer will lose a valuable step or two in adjusting himself to the new path. Of course, this is somewhat of a "slowdown" stunt and will not work if two or more opponents are close on the runner's heels.

## SPINNERS

Footwork of the fullback on spinner plays varies with the play and with the coach. There are many methods of achieving the desired effect.

The back may spin so as to (1) hold his position, (2) move toward the line of scrimmage, (3) move away from the line or (4) move laterally. He may spin right or left, and he may execute a full spin or any fraction thereof.

In designating the footwork for any particular spinner play, the coach must take into account (1) the timing of the play, which problem includes the speed of the decoy and ball-carrying backs and the interference leaders, (2) the necessity of hiding the ball from the opponent whom he is attempting to decoy out of position, and (3) the projected path of the ball.

Below is detailed one method of spinning with the ball. We repeat that there are other methods.

*Half Spin.*—The half spin may be executed in one of three ways:

(1) Cross over in the desired direction, holding the ball on the hip.

(2) Carry one foot directly back and pivot.

(3) Step with lead foot, then cross over.

If the half spin is to the right, to swing back into the line the spinner-back drives off his *right* foot.

The cross-over enables the spinner-back to gain position toward the line of scrimmage, the back pivot to gain depth and the lead step to gain position laterally.

*Full Spin.*—To execute the full spin to the right, the spinner-back: (1) crosses over with his left foot, (2) pulls the right foot directly behind the left, pivoting meanwhile, and (3) completes the spin and steps off with the left foot, driving off the right.

The spin to the left is executed exactly in reverse.

*Receiving Ball.*—In taking the ball from the spinnerback, a player must have his body *open to the ball*. That means he must have his *outside foot advanced* as the exchange is made. Actions of the backs on handoff plays will be adjusted in accordance with this rule.

*The T Quarterback.*—The "up back" in the T formation, taking the ball on the center's blind pass, may execute either the cross-over front pivot or the reverse pivot or half pivot to either side. The cross-over puts the ball immediately into position to be picked off by the halfback on a "quick" play; the reverse pivot times out nicely on slightly delayed plays and puts the quarterback in position either to fake or to hand the ball to either side. He may also follow up any type of pivot by dropping back into forward passing position, or he may carry the ball himself.

The quarterback is responsible for placing the ball in the fixed hands of the deep backs as they whiz by, eyes on the point of attack.

## 5

### *The Passing Game*

IN RELATION to the running game, a team's passing game may be (1) its *primary* weapon, (2) a *supplementary* weapon or (3) a *complementary* weapon.

To say it another way: Some teams use the pass as their principal means of moving the ball, mixing in enough runs to keep the defense unsettled. Others reverse that method, employing passes to keep the defense from "ganging up" against their strong running plays.

The best-balanced team is one that is equally dangerous through the air and on the ground. The defense can never get set against such a team; it cannot afford to guess but must be ready for everything. Consequently it will never be entirely ready for anything.

It is not possible for every team to have a perfectly balanced attack. A team's scheme of attack will be shaped by its personnel and tempered by the coach's theories. The most resourceful coach is one who correctly gauges the capacities of his squad and plans his offense accordingly.

#### ESSENTIALS

To have a strong passing attack, a team must have:

1. A good passer.



2. Good receivers.
3. Good protection for the passer.
4. Pass plays appropriate for all types of defenses.

(And, as already suggested, one of the biggest boosts for the passing attack is a good running attack.)

#### THE PASSER

Great passers are born—not made. Most boys can throw a football, but most boys are not passers. A coach can help develop a passer with constructive advice, and the passer can improve himself with study and practice.

The fact remains, however, that unless the boy is blessed with certain natural qualities, he will never be a great passer. He may be a good thrower. There's a difference.

Here are some of the qualifications of a topflight passer:

1. He must be able to throw the ball accurately at close, medium and long ranges, and his passes should be light and easy to catch. Large hands and, particularly, long fingers are distinct assets. Strong forearms and fingers are essential, and above-average height is desirable (so that the passer can see downfield over the heads of rushing linemen).

2. He must have "split vision"—the ability to see the entire receiving field at once. Players who do not possess this ability waste time looking here and there for receivers. The natural passer can see all his receivers simultaneously.

3. He must be calm and well-poised at all times, yet quick of mind and action. He will be harried and punished by rushing opponents; yet he can't afford to let it affect his aim and judgment. Quicker than it takes to read these lines, he must find an open receiver and fire the ball to him; or, if no receiver is open, restrain the natural impulse to get rid of the ball. He must not throw the ball too quickly, before his man is open; he must not hold the ball too long, allowing defensive backs to recover and rushers to reach him.

4. He should be a good ball-carrier, and if he is capable of doing the team's punting, so much the better. Ball-carrying ability on the part of a passer makes the defense hesitant about rushing. If over-rushed or under-rushed, the passer-runner can make yardage on the ground. On the fake-pass-and-run plays that are part of every team's repertoire, his value is enhanced. Occasionally from deep punt formation the passer-kicker can catch the opposition napping with a throw instead of a punt. As this opportunity usually comes in the offensive team's own territory, such a play is dangerous unless the man faking the punt is an expert and experienced passer.

The coach who finds a lad with all these qualifications can thank his lucky stars. If he does not find such a boy on his squad, that does not mean he is to give up the idea of developing a passing attack. On the contrary, he must take the player who comes nearest to filling the bill and around him work out a *supplementary* passing game. The team that cannot pass at all isn't going to win many football games, no matter how potent its running attack.

#### PASSING TECHNIQUE

*Grip.*—If a player throws the ball freely and accurately, his coach will not be worried about his method of holding it. As in the execution of other fundamentals, results count.

Most passers hold the ball slightly to the rear of its middle. A passer's fingers and thumb are well spread and he grips the ball lightly. Some place the thumb on the lace; some place the fingers across the lace; some disregard the lace.

If the passer finds his passes are "heavy," that is, hard to catch, a variation of the above grip is indicated: Place the index finger parallel with the long axis of the ball so that its tip almost lies on the rear point. The drag of this finger tends to elevate the front point of the ball and make it float.

If the ball is wet, it should be gripped very lightly. This hold is akin to a "palm pass" grip.

When the passer receives the ball from center, unless he is faking a run or handoff, he fixes it in his throwing hand immediately and brings it up about shoulder high with both hands.

*Delivery.*—The ball should be lifted back and up over the shoulder. The left hand (of a right-handed passer) falls away and slightly forward; the right hand brings the ball behind the ear with upper arm parallel to the ground. The ball is thrown from behind the ear with wrist snap, much like a catcher's peg to second base. Holding the ball too long on the forward sweep will cause a nose-down pass.

The ball is turned loose with a *pull-down* motion, and the wrist *does not turn* over. The palm is down on the follow-through.

Faking the ball, by pounding it into the free hand, is a helpful habit for passers. A skillful faker can help his receivers get open by motioning to throw in one direction and then throwing in another. A good fake sometimes will slow down rushers, causing them to leap into the air and raise their hands to block the supposed pass. This reaction takes the steam out of their rush and gives the passer a good opportunity to get the ball away.

The passer should be relaxed and in balance at all times. He will anticipate the receiver's break into the clear and give him the ball on the side *away* from the defensive man. This practice eliminates interceptions, the nightmare of passers and passing teams. If a pass never costs a team more than the loss of a down, it is a safe weapon.

*Footwork.*—According to the play, a passer may be required to throw the ball (1) from about the same place he received it, (2) from a set position a few steps back or to the right or left of his original position, or (3) on the run.

Alternatives (2) and (3) probably will start as fake runs, while (1) probably will look like a pass from its inception.

Some coaches teach their passers always to step forward with the left foot as they take the ball. This move gives the play the fleeting appearance of a run. Then the passer crosses over with the same left foot and retreats to the desired position.

In retreating and maneuvering, the passer should keep in mind that (1) he must maintain balance and be ready to throw the instant there is an opportunity and (2) he must stay within the prearranged protection area. His footwork will consist of a series of shifts, short hops and shuffles, rather than long steps, unless he is forced by rushers to move swiftly to another area.

The passer should not spread his feet wide apart, as he cannot throw the ball so well or move so agilely as from a narrower stance.

The pass is thrown off the back foot (right for a right-handed passer) and the passer steps in the direction of the throw, following through with arm and body. He pivots on his back foot to obtain the desired position. If the passer finds rushers converging upon him, he should retreat quickly several paces and get set again, rather than attempt to throw while in the act of backing up.

For long passes, the passer may fade slightly, fake a short pass, and then retreat quickly several more paces and get set for the long throw.

For the pass after a short run, the passer usually turns his run into a fade at the proper point and operates as under the "stationary pass" conditions described above. This type of pass has added deception, but it is harder to protect the passer.

On the real running pass a righthander going to his right plants his right foot and throws, or leaps into the air off his right foot and throws.

Going to his left, he plants the left foot, pivots backward with the right foot and throws off the right foot.

On the *jump pass*, thrown after faking a line play, the passer leaps off his right foot and delivers the ball while in the air.

Whatever his throwing position, the passer must instinctively

and immediately react (1) to protect himself and (2) to cover a possible interception and runback. The rules take cognizance of the passer's momentarily vulnerable position by (1) providing that a penalty may be assessed against the defense for a "late tackle," after the ball is clearly away, and (2) allowing him to use his hands to ward off opponents while the ball is in the air.

Frequently, however, the ball is thrown and the rushers arrive almost simultaneously, and the passer has no opportunity to cover up, the rushers no time to "pull their punches." That is when it takes cold nerve on the part of the passer to carry out his duties without becoming "gun shy."

#### TYPES OF PASSES

We have already spoken of one classification system for passes—according to the throwing position of the passer.

Another classification would include (1) forward (overhand) passes, (2) shovel (forward) passes and (3) lateral and backward passes.

The forward passes proper may be divided according to *plan*, (1) *spot passes*, thrown to a specified spot with the receiver responsible for getting there to catch it, and (2) *choice passes*, in which the passer may take his choice of any open receiver. There is also such a thing as an *option pass*. On the optional play the passer usually starts running wide; he is given the option of passing to a specified receiver if the latter is open or continuing his run.

Passes may be classified according to *trajectory*: (1) the *bullet pass*, which travels straight from passer's to receiver's hands, and (2) the *lofted pass*, calculated to describe an arc over the defender's head to a receiver who has broken past. The general rule is: Bullet the short ones, loft the long ones.

And finally there is the classification according to depth of

the pass: (1) *behind the line*, (2) *flat and short zone*, (3) *deep or long zone*.

Special mention will be made later in this chapter of the shovel and lateral pass techniques. Meanwhile let's consider various other factors and problems of the passing game.

#### PASS RECEIVING

As with passers, so with receivers: Some boys can catch a football better than others. Speed and good hands are essential equipment for first-class receivers. But all receivers can improve themselves with practice and proper technique.

Certain general rules for ball-handlers already have been listed (Chapter 4.) They apply to the pass receiver. Some further suggestions are:

1. Catch the ball with both hands, rather than against the body.
2. Be as relaxed as possible when taking the ball.
3. Never take your eyes off the ball after it is thrown. If it is necessary to change direction, pivot so as to keep the ball in sight.
4. If running *away* from the ball, take it with thumbs *out*. If running at a square angle to the ball's path, take it with thumbs *in*, unless it is a low pass. If taking the ball while facing the passer, catch a high ball with thumbs *in*, a low ball with thumbs *out*. (Baseball players will have no difficulty remembering these "natural laws.")
5. In catching the ball, always have the hands in front of the body if possible.

#### GETTING OPEN

Before catching a pass, the receiver must get into a designated area and away from the defenders.



Depending on the opposition's pass-defense tactics, he is likely to encounter his initial trouble on the line of scrimmage. Opposing linemen may attempt to shove him backward or jam him in. Then one of the line-backers may work on him. (Potential pass-receivers may be shoved until the ball is thrown.)

To elude a lineman attempting to hold him up, the end or wingback may (1) fake with head and shoulder in one direction, go another; (2) fake a block on the lineman, drop low and quickly move on out; (3) pivot on the line of scrimmage and move out and around the "holdup artist." He should not offer a broadside to the defense; rather he should turn sidewise and slip or slice through.

A pivot or quick direction change should free the receiver from the line-backer.

The end will find it easier to get out if he widens the split between him and his adjacent teammate. He must not form a habit, however, of taking this position only on pass plays; the opposition would quickly recognize it as a tip-off.

In the secondary there are two general methods of shaking a receiver into the open. One entails the use of individual stunts to deceive an individual opponent. The other brings in the teamwork of two or more eligible receivers, the object being to confuse or outnumber the defenders so that one receiver will be left unguarded. A combination of these methods will be used on most pass plays.

*Individual Stunts.*—The maneuvers most helpful in getting loose for short passes are the quick *change of direction* and the *reverse pivot*. When more depth is desired, the *change of pace* and the *stop and go* are valuable.

At all times the pass receiver must be a good actor. His cue is to convince the opponent, by head and shoulder faking or other action, that he is about to do something quite contrary to his real intentions. A good pass defender cannot be shaken off by speed alone. The receiver must trap him into making a false move, then break by him. Decoys must help by acting and

running as if they were actually attempting to catch the ball.

The stunts shown in Chart 1 are calculated to free a receiver momentarily for a short pass. If followed up appropriately, most of them can be turned into depth-gaining maneuvers.

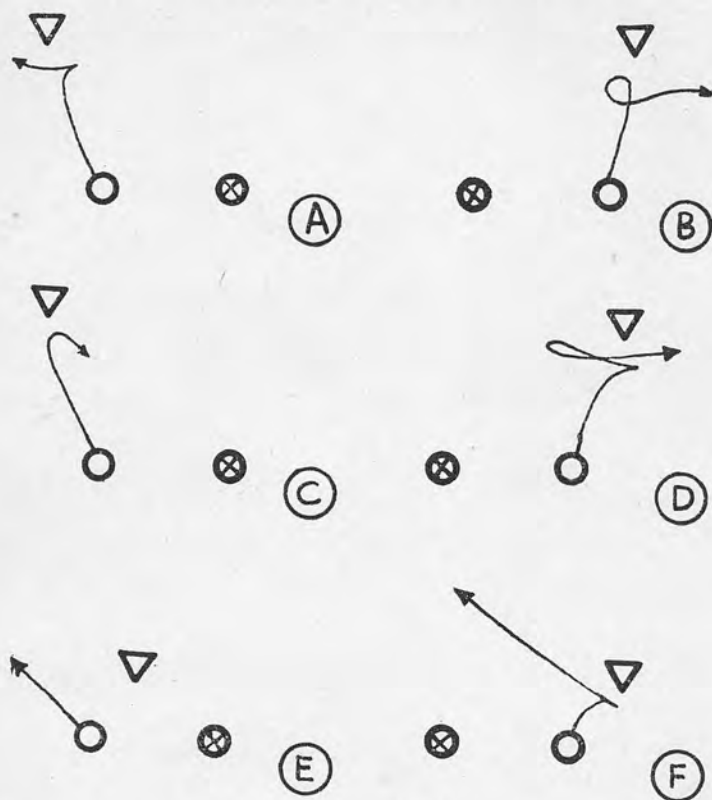


Chart 1: *Pass Receiver's Stunts*

(A) Fake and Break—receiver feints one way with head and shoulders, breaks in opposite direction. (B) Pivot—receiver runs directly at defender, does reverse pivot, breaks at 90-degree angle. (C) Button-hook—receiver executes "to-the-rear-march," comes back toward passer one or two steps. (D) Double Fake—feints one way, goes another, quickly pivots back and breaks. (E) Quick Break—end or wingback sprints into flat zone. (F) Check and Break—receiver momentarily blocks or fakes a block on the line, then breaks.

When the receiver is going deep for a long pass, one of his best bets to elude a halfback is a change of pace (Chapter 4). He will approach the defender at moderate speed, looking him in the eye; then at the proper instant he will put on a burst and break away at a slight angle, probably to the outside.

This and other appropriate stunts for deep receivers are sketched in Chart 2.

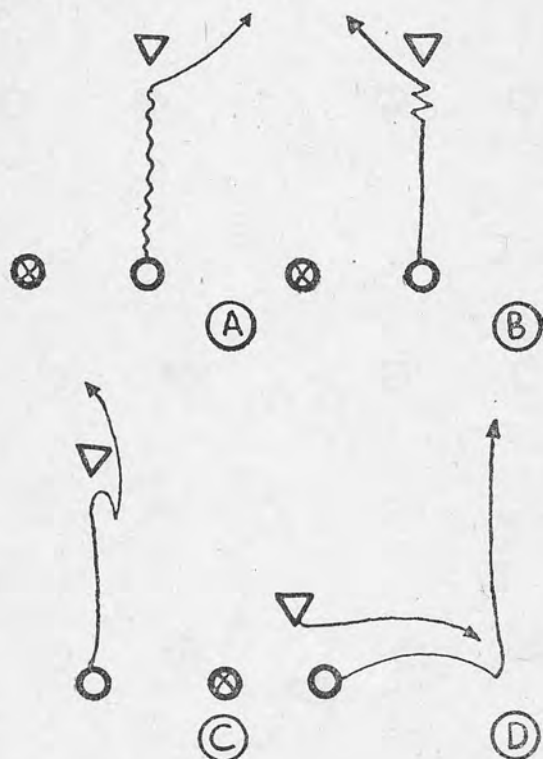


Chart 2: *Getting Loose Deep*

(A) Change of Pace—extra burst of speed shoots receiver into clear. (B) Dance and Break—variation of change-of-pace stunt; receiver dances in front of defender, then breaks around him. (C) Stop and Go—receiver executes a button hook (see Chart 1-C); as defender comes up, he pivots and shoots past him. (D) 90-Degree Break—used against a closely trailing defender.

Teamwork of two or more potential receivers puts extra pressure on the defenders and often enables one receiver to break into the clear. By deployment of the ends and wingbacks (man-in-motion or flanker in the formations which do not have a wingback) in various patterns, an indefinite number of problems may be created for the defense. Disposition of the defensive players and their coverage plan (zone, man-for-man or combination) will determine which of these *pass patterns* will be most effective.

The end and wingback (or flanker) form a fine team on pass offense. Chart 3 shows some of the basic maneuvers they can work together.

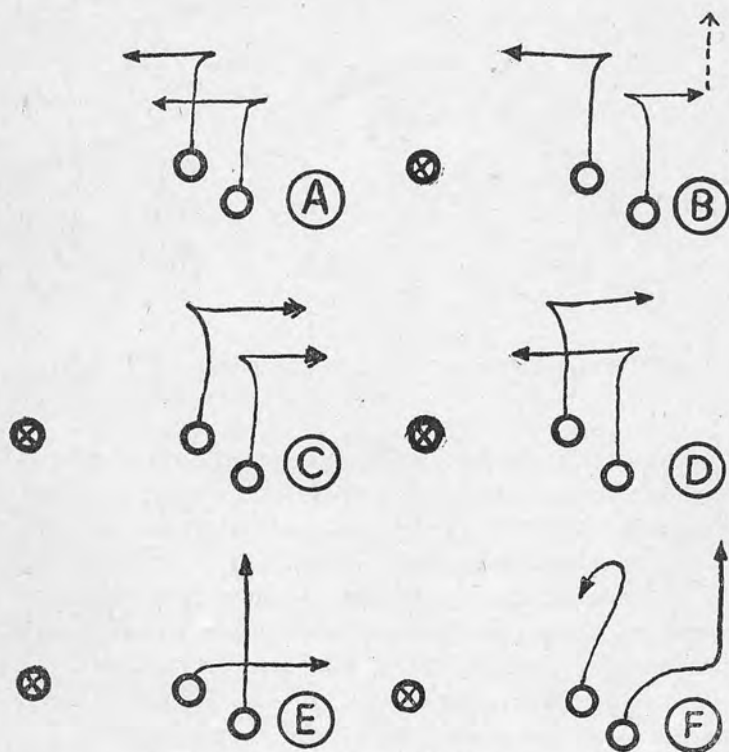


Chart 3: *End and Wingback Patterns*

By bringing the other end into the team, or a back who has completed his blocking assignment and is now ready to sneak out for a pass, the defensive problem can be further complicated. Some examples are shown in Chart 4.

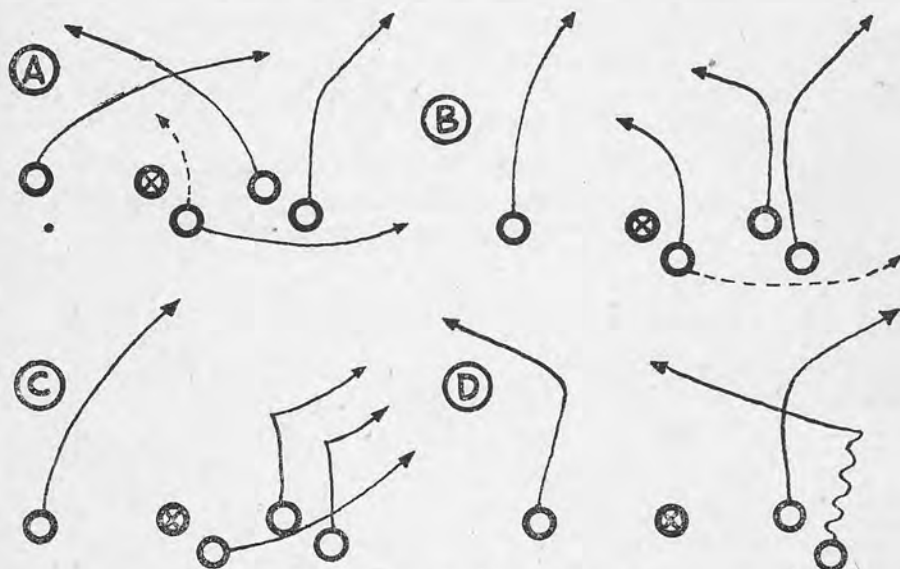


Chart 4: *Standard Pass Patterns*

(A) Wing down, ends crossing. (B) End over middle. (C) Flooding a zone. (D) Wing over middle.

In this chart A is the familiar "ends crossing," which stunt is especially confusing when the defense is trying to cover the ends man-for-man. B shows how the third man out on the long side of a single wingback formation is in position to "come to the rescue" if the deeper men are covered. C shows how these same three men can "flood a zone" when the defenders are attempting to cover specified territory rather than specified receivers. D shows a good pattern against a 6-3-2 or 5-4-2 defense.

Here are some final suggestions for the pass receiver:

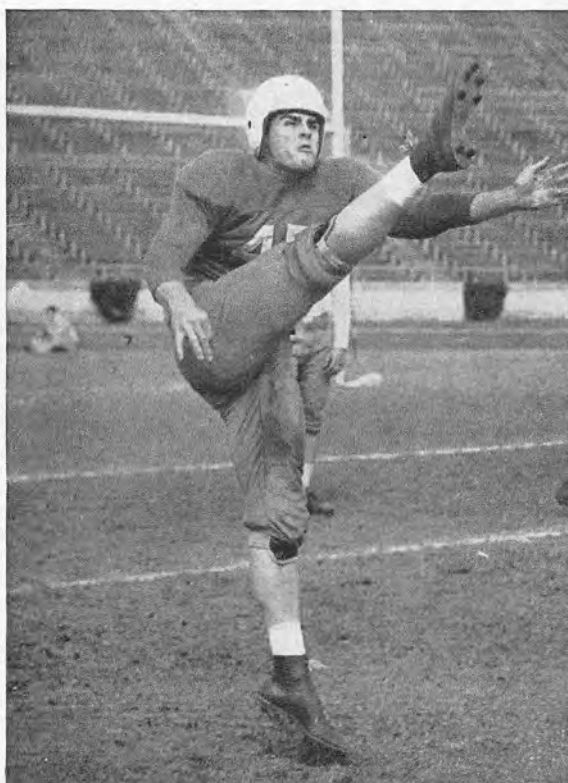
1. Always run under control, so you can execute your fakes

## PUNTING

(1) Punter has advanced a step and a half and dropped ball in perfect position for hitting it with the outside of his instep. Note his concentration on the ball.



(2) The kick and follow-through. Note full extension of the kicking leg and perfect balance. (The kicker is Raymond Borneman, University of Texas.)







## THE FORWARD PASS

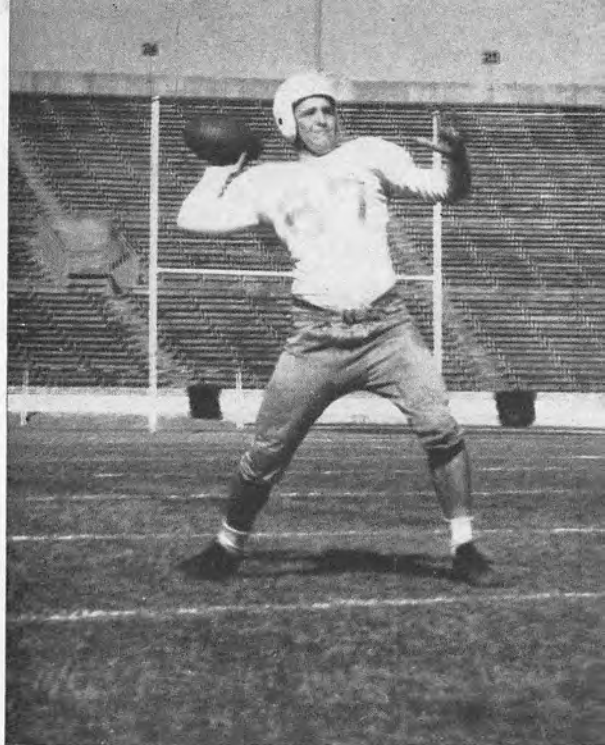
Bobby Lane, University of  
Texas passer . . .

(1) carries ball to shoulder  
height with both hands . . .

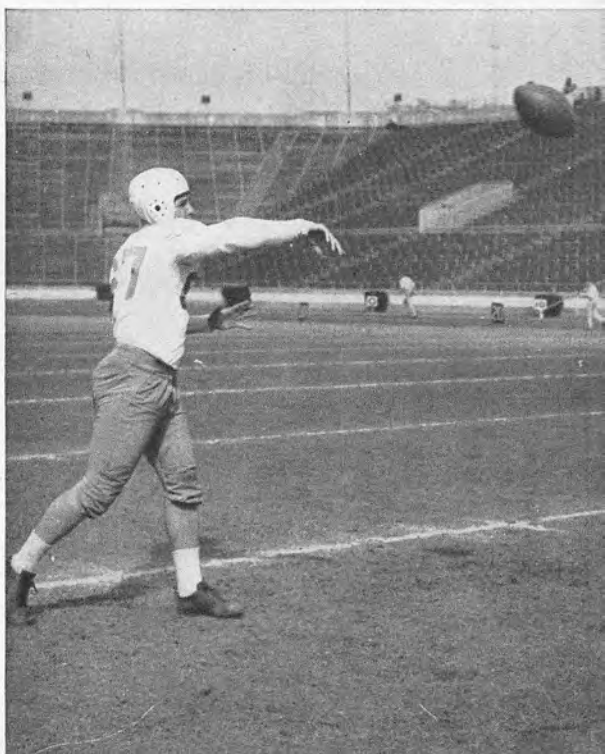


(2) fakes pass, pounding  
ball into open palm . . .

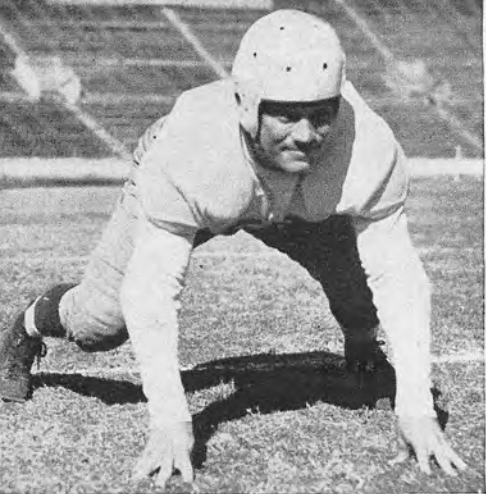
(3) cocks arm again and ...



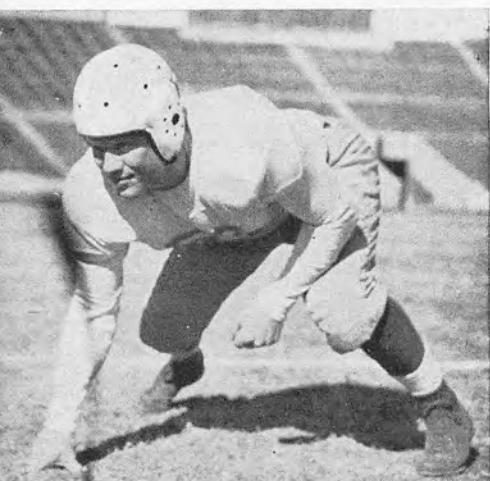
(4) lets fly and follows through, palm down.



## DEFENSIVE STANCE



(1) Four-point.



(2) Three-point.



(3) Semi-erect.

## BLOCKS

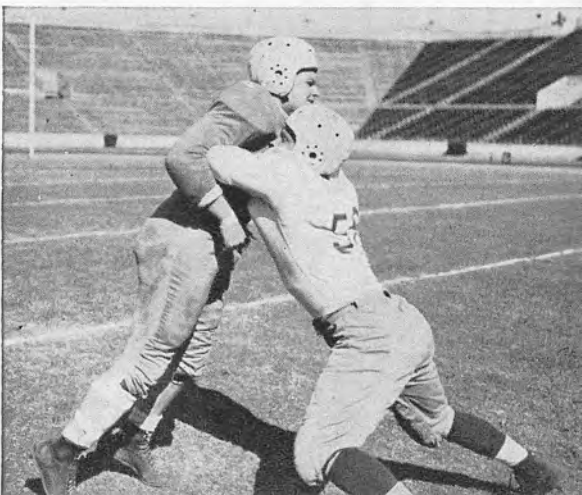
(1) The shoulder block.

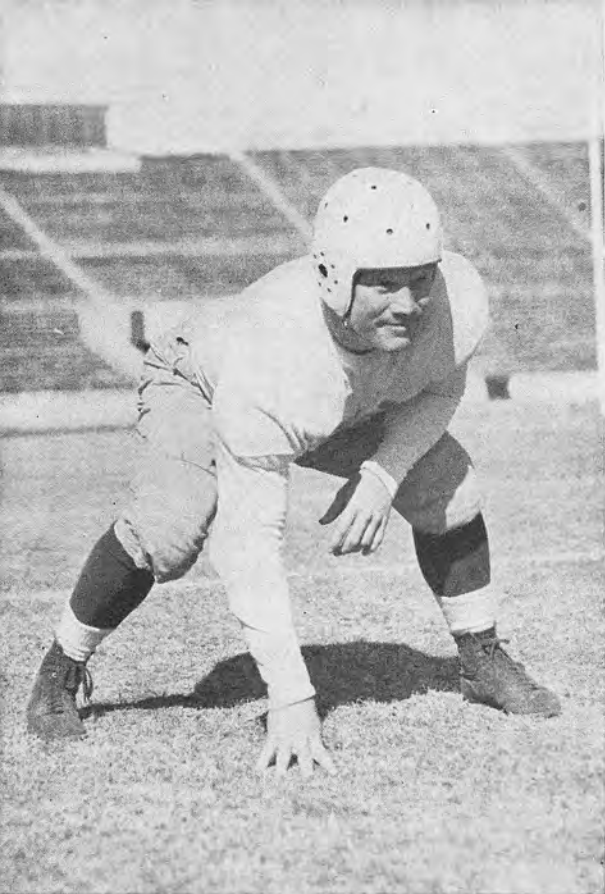


(2) The cross-body block.



(3) The shield block.





## OFFENSIVE STANCE

## SIDELINE TACKLE

Tackler shoots head and body across the path of the ball-carrier, pins his legs and rolls with the impact.



## ONE-ON-TWO STUNTS

Buddy Jungmichel, All-America League lineman, demonstrates two ways the tackle can handle an end and wingback blocking team.

(1) He plays the end by driving hands hard into his side, meanwhile throwing buttocks into wingback . . .

(2) disposes of end, swings into wingback with shoulder and elbow and is ready to cover his territory.

(3) He dips under the shoulders of the blocking team and . . .

(4) reacts quickly to cover his territory.







## THE PLACE KICK

(1) As holder sets ball on ground, kicker steps forward with left foot.  
(2) He swings leg in perpendicular arc toward center of cross-bar. Note concentration of both players on the ball throughout the kick. (Kicker is Frank Guess—holder, Travis Raven, both of the University of Texas.)



and other maneuvers without losing balance or tightening up.

2. Cut corners squarely. A receiver who runs in circles is easy to cover.

3. As you come out of your fake, look for the ball. A good passer will anticipate your movements and aim the ball where you are *going to be* when it arrives. Note: The passer can help by faking a throw as the receiver fakes the defender.

4. If you cannot catch the ball, try to make sure that the defender does not intercept it.

5. Go after any throw in your direction, even if it is a bad pass. You might make a miraculous catch.

#### PROTECTING THE PASSER

The best passer and receivers in the country couldn't operate successfully if the passer was not amply protected against rushing. Except on the shortest spot passes, a successful forward requires *time* in its execution—time for the receivers to get loose, time for the passer to locate them.

By the same token, strong passer protection will do much for an otherwise mediocre passing attack. Even heavy-footed receivers can get open if they have all afternoon. Any passer's efficiency will be enhanced if he doesn't have to worry about rushers.

A typical situation on passing down would be: The offensive team sends three men, the two ends and a back, downfield fast; a second back may (1) also go down, (2) block momentarily and then slip out into the flat zone or (3) stay in and block. Counting out the passer, that leaves six or seven men to block out four, five or six (rarely seven) rushers. If the passer is particularly proficient at taking care of himself, more receivers can be sent down than otherwise.

The two general plans for protecting the passer are (1) *cup* or *zone* protection and (2) *individual blocking*.

*Cup*.—The cup is easier to form from a balanced than an un-

balanced line. The center and guards may remain in place, or they may hit any opponents in front of them with a quick jab step and shield block (see Chapter 2) and immediately retreat to their original positions. The tackles drop back about two yards, and two backs are assigned to the zones just outside the tackles. Positions of the protectors in the cup arrangement, from both the balanced and unbalanced lines, are shown in Chart 5.

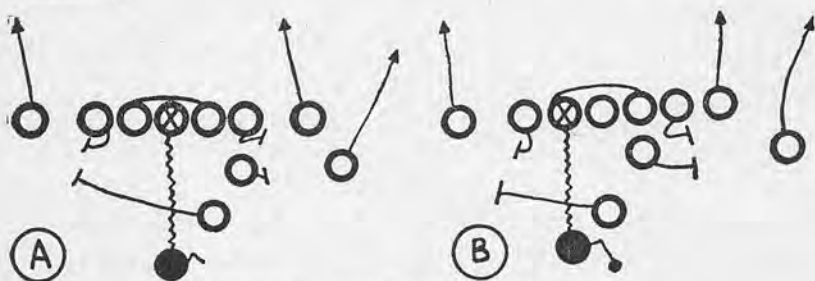


Chart 5: *Protecting the Passer—Cup*  
(A) Balanced line. (B) Unbalanced line.

*Individual Blocking.*—The cup method has the advantage of being standardized for any type of line (five-, six- or seven-man) that might be used by the defense. The individual blocking method has the advantage of more definite assignments.

Let's study this style of protection against a typical defense—the over-shifted six-man line. The likely situation and solution are pictured in the accompanying Chart 6.

The center drops back and picks up the defensive right end; the left guard blocks the defensive right tackle; the right guard blocks the defensive right guard; the inside tackle takes the defensive left guard; the outside tackle blocks the defensive left tackle, the blocking back (No. 2) moves over and picks up the defensive left end. Under this arrangement the fullback (No. 3) may (1) block a crashing line-backer, (2) pick up any rusher who has evaded a teammate, (3) take the rushing left end, allowing the blocking back to go out as a receiver or (4) move

out laterally himself to be in position for a flat pass. Or the center may stay in the line and the No. 3 back block the right end, giving the passer eligible receivers right and left if the ends don't come across the line.

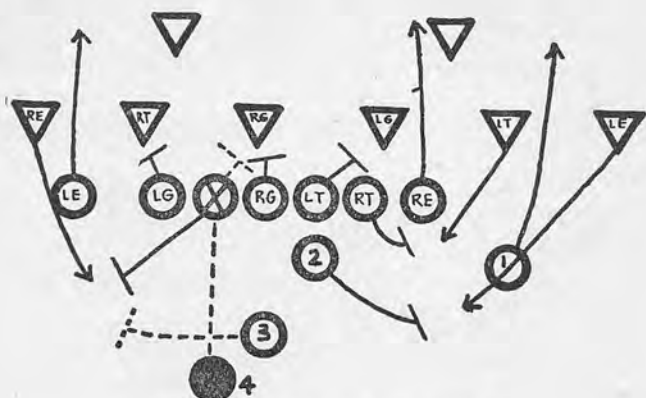


Chart 6: *Protecting the Passer*  
Individual Blocking.

By prearranged signal, the center and right guard may switch assignments. It is well to have several different methods of protecting against each type of defense, or several variations of the basic method; else the defense eventually will "get wise" and shoot rushers through momentarily unguarded territory.

The simplest and perhaps most effective method of protecting the passer off a balanced line is for the guards to block the guards and the tackles to block the tackles, with the center dropping back about a yard. As a variation, the guard and tackle on the same side may cross-block. In this setup the center gets the defensive right end and the blocking back gets the left end.

If the pass play starts with a fake run, the blockers must move out fast or the passer will run away from them. When they have reached the prescribed area, they protect as for the stationary pass.

Blockers should not drop back so far as to interfere with the passer; they must meet the rushers "at the cross-roads." Fast-rushing opponents must be *led*. The rushers tend to drive in deeper on passes than on punts. The faster that blockers get back and get set, the nearer to the line of scrimmage they can cut off the rushers.

Chart 7 shows examples of protection methods from various formations and against various defenses. The number of receivers sent down (two, three or four) should be varied in order to keep the defense guessing.

The mechanics of blocking, as detailed in Chapter 2, are brought to bear in a specialized manner in protecting the passer (or the kicker). In addition to their blocking fundamentals, the protectors should remember:

1. The protecting block is either a shoulder or a shield block—one that enables the blocker to stay on his feet. Don't go to the ground.

2. You are protecting territory, not opening a hole. Don't leave your post to chase an opponent—make him take the outside course. His own momentum, if judiciously directed, will carry him out of the danger zone.

3. Move quickly into blocking position. This is tremendously important when the pass follows a short run. You must be in position as the passer fades for his throw.

4. When the pass is away, the protectors fan out immediately across the field to guard against a possible interception runback.

The passer, too, must "cover" the pass. As soon as he throws the ball, he should move to a position between the intended receiver and his own goal. The protectors fan out right or left, according to the side on which they have been blocking.

One last word concerning protection should be directed to the passer: He must stay within the protective zone. Blockers can't protect a passer who runs around willy-nilly or retreats too deep. Of course, if the protective ring is broken, the passer has to take whatever emergency measures he can to get the pass away.

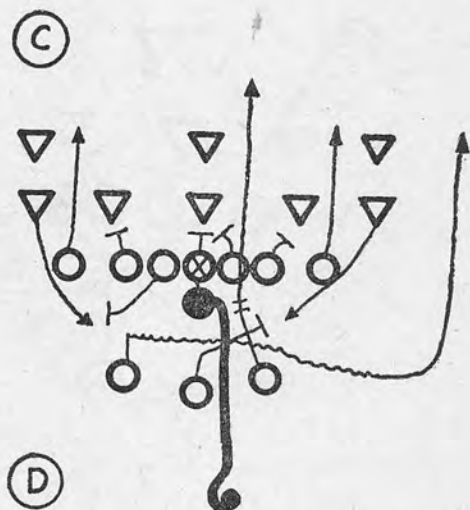
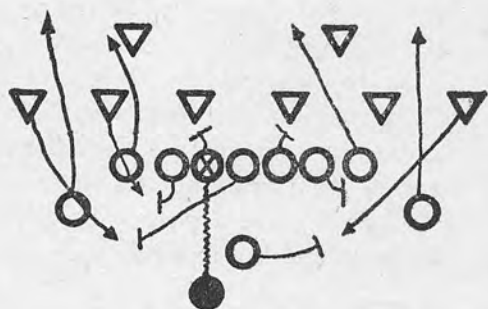
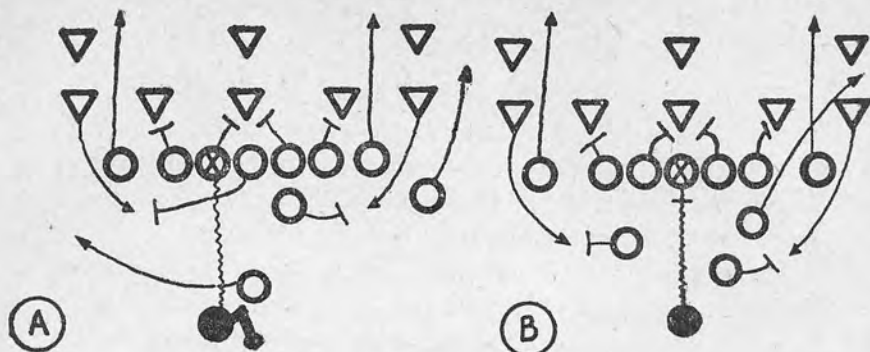


Chart 7:

*Protecting the Passer*

(A) Single wingback formation, against five-man line. (B) Short punt formation, balanced line, against five-man line. (C) Double wingback formation against six-man line. (D) T formation, man in motion, against five-man line.



## SHOVEL PASSES

The shovel pass is an underhand spiral, usually thrown to a receiver cutting across in front of the passer parallel to and behind the line of scrimmage. Shovels count in the records as forward passes, which technically they are. The effect, however, is more that of a running play and they develop as such.

Shovel passes are often effective against a team that is rushing the passer with great vigor and abandon. The tailback gets the ball from center, fakes a handoff or an overhand pass (thus encouraging the opposing lineman to rush him) and then shovels the ball to a wingback crossing five or six yards in front of him. Trap blocking usually figures in the shovel pass play-plan. "Trapping" an opponent means allowing him to cross the line and penetrate unopposed, then driving him out of the play with a block from an unexpected angle.

Chart 8 shows a typical shovel pass play in which the right defensive end is trapped by the right guard.

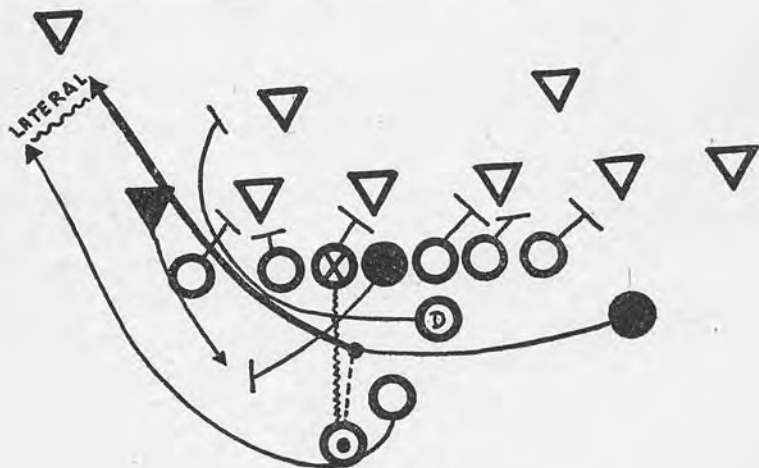


Chart 8: *Shovel Pass Play*

To right halfback, with optional lateral to fullback, who has faked taking ball from tailback.

## LATERAL PASSES

The so-called lateral pass is actually, almost always, a backward pass. It is executed either with two hands (basketball pass) or one (underhand pass). The former is an end-over-end pass; the latter has a slight spiral—about the same thing as a shovel pass.

A lateral may be part of a planned play, an option or an extemporaneous effort to pick up extra yardage. It may be one phase of a series of plays, as when a wide, deep lateral develops out of a fake line plunge. (See Chart 24, page 104.) It may be made with both the passer and the receiver in motion, either behind the line or beyond it. The plan usually is for the original carrier to draw the tacklers to him and then, at the right instant, flip the ball back to a trailing teammate.

Most of the fumbles laid at the lateral's door come out or spur-of-the-moment tosses, when the carrier would have done better to hold the ball. The ball should NOT be lateraled:

1. When the intended receiver is more than five yards away, out of position to make the catch or closely followed by an opponent.
2. When the original carrier has a chance to keep going.
3. When a tackler has pinned the ball-carrier's arms.

Although lateral passes downfield often turn modest gains into touchdowns, the heady player uses them discreetly. In case of doubt, he holds onto the ball. He is guided to a large extent by the trailing man, who can see the situation better than he can. At the proper time, the trailer calls for the ball.

## *The Kicking Game*

THERE WILL always be plenty of "foot" in football. The team with a strong kicking game rarely will find itself out-classed. A team improves with the improvement of its kicking, and with the improvement of its defense against opponents' kicking.

In a closely contested game, under normal conditions, each team will punt eight or ten times. If one can gain five yards on each exchange of punts, that yardage and the advantageous position it may give the team on the field often will represent the margin of victory.

Thus, the punt has a tremendous offensive value over and above its value as a defensive measure.

The kicking game may be broken down as follows:

1. The Punt.

How to punt.

Protecting the punter.

Covering the punt.

Receiving and returning the punt.

How to block the punt.

2. The Place Kick.

Extra point conversion.

Field goals.

Drop kicks.

Protecting the place-kicker.

## 3. The Kickoff.

How to kick off.

Covering the kickoff.

Returning the kickoff.

## THE PUNT

## THE PUNTER

As in the passing game, there are "naturals" in the kicking game. A "natural" punter has superior leg drive and rhythm. These are the boys who, with diligent practice and the application of sound fundamentals, become great punters. Many players, however, can learn to punt moderately well. If taught the correct form and given sufficient practice, a boy with average kicking ability can become an accurate and reliable, if not a brilliant, punter.

With the punter, results count more than style. He has certain standards to meet: He must be able to kick the ball reasonably far, get it away fast, place his kicks judiciously—and he must be consistent.

If a punter is doing all that, the coach isn't going to be concerned as to what else he does when he kicks. The coach will let well enough alone.

Few punters are so proficient, however, that they cannot profit by an occasional brushing-up on fundamentals. Like baseball sluggers, some punters are subject to slumps. What they must do then is to start all over and correct the faulty footwork, poor timing or whatnot that is causing the trouble.

A punter needs to be a cool and collected individual. He must be able to operate smoothly and expeditiously, without lost motion. If the punter is overwhelmed by his responsibility, or if big tackles looming up in front of him make him nervous, he is likely to fumble or flub his kick.

## HOW TO PUNT

*Stance.*—The punter should stand at least ten yards behind the line of scrimmage. If he is slow, he should make it eleven yards—provided his center can make a fast, accurate pass at that distance.

The feet should be fairly close together and about on a line. Some punters prefer to have the kicking foot back a little; some like it a bit advanced.

The weight should be evenly distributed on the feet. The body is slightly inclined from the waist. Hands are comfortably extended at hip height, ready to receive the ball.

The punter never takes his eyes off the ball from the time it is passed until his kick is away.

*Hold.*—The punter takes the ball with relaxed hands in a flowing motion and immediately shapes it for dropping. He may place his hands on opposite sides of the ball, or he may place the right hand (if he is a right-footed kicker) under the ball and his left hand at the side. It does not matter, as long as the ball can be dropped correctly. The front end of the ball should be turned slightly in and down, unless an especially high kick is desired. In that case, the nose is turned slightly up.

*Footwork.*—As the ball is received, the punter takes a short step with his kicking foot—then a full step with the other foot—then kicks. This "one-and-a-half step" method brings the kicker into balance on his left foot, in position to put maximum effort into the punt and get a good follow-through.

*Drop.*—As the foot comes up to meet the ball, the toes should be extended and depressed. The ball is held over the kicking foot. As nearly as is possible and comfortable, the punter tries to lay the ball on the kicking foot. The ball should be dropped so that the *outside instep* may strike it at the center of the long axis. The ball and the foot must "fit," so that one spot on the ball will be in contact with one spot on the foot. This contact will produce a *spiral punt*.

*Contact.*—As the leg swings into the ball in a perpendicular arc along the line of intended flight, it should not be stiff. At the instant of contact, the knee and ankle are locked. A good golfer puts punch into his drives with last-second wrist snap. The punter's locking his ankle and knee at impact serves a similar purpose for him.

*Follow-through.*—The leg is swung through with force, and the foot finishes up higher than the head in continuation of the kicking arc. The left arm usually is extended in front, the right brought up over the head and extended to the rear.

*Suggestions.*—Here are a few tips for the punter:

1. To place a punt, face in the direction you want the ball to go and kick straight away. Don't try to slice or pull the ball.

2. In kicking for the sideline, aim at a spot five or ten yards in bounds. This practice will help you keep the ball from going out short.

3. Try to kick the ball out of bounds, or high and short of a touchback.

4. Kick a low spiral into the wind by increasing the downward pitch of the nose as the ball is dropped. Be sure your arms are fully extended. Hit the ball as close to the ground as you can.

5. For a high, short kick (as when hoping to induce a fumble near the opponent's goal line), tilt the nose of the ball slightly upward and drop the ball a little closer to the body than usual. Hit the ball as far off the ground as you can.

6. On a windy day, try hard to lay the ball on the kicking foot. If it is dropped any appreciable distance, the wind will blow it out of position.

7. Be calm but quick. Remember you have, on the average, just two seconds to get your kick away, from the time the ball leaves the center's hands.

8. Remember *timing* is more important than *force*. Don't try to overpower the ball—develop kicking rhythm.

*The Quick Kick.*—For the quick kick from regular position,



four or five yards behind the line of scrimmage, most players prefer the *rocker step*. As the ball is received, the right-footed quick-kicker takes a short step back with his left foot—a full step forward with the same foot—and kicks.

The quick kick is a splendid offensive weapon with a favoring wind and the safety man playing up close. For best effect it should be a low kick with the ball traveling end-over-end, so as to get a good roll. The *end-over-end kick* is made by placing the ball evenly on top of the foot so as to strike it with the entire top surface, rather than the outside instep alone as in the spiral.

#### PROTECTING THE PUNTER

The kicking team's primary concern is to keep the *kicking area* clear of enemy players. That area may be visualized as a triangle, the base of which is formed by the five middle linemen. The apex is the kicker's foot.

In addition to the linemen, three backs are available for punt protection. Two of these will protect on the kicking side; the other will be positioned on the punter's "off" side. (A possible exception to this rule will be noted below.)

The protection task will be affected by two factors: (1) the efforts of the enemy and (2) the necessity of covering the punt as quickly and effectively as possible. Coverage must remain a secondary consideration until the kick is away, there being nothing to gain in "covering" a punt that never is made.

Defensive situations the kicking team must expect to encounter include: (1) *normal*, with four or five men rushing; (2) *loaded*, with six or more rushing, and (3) *bring-back*, with most of the opponents holding up and dropping back to form interference for the punt return.

Not knowing the defensive plan, the kicking team must prepare to protect the kicking area at all costs with the arrangement shown in Chart 9.

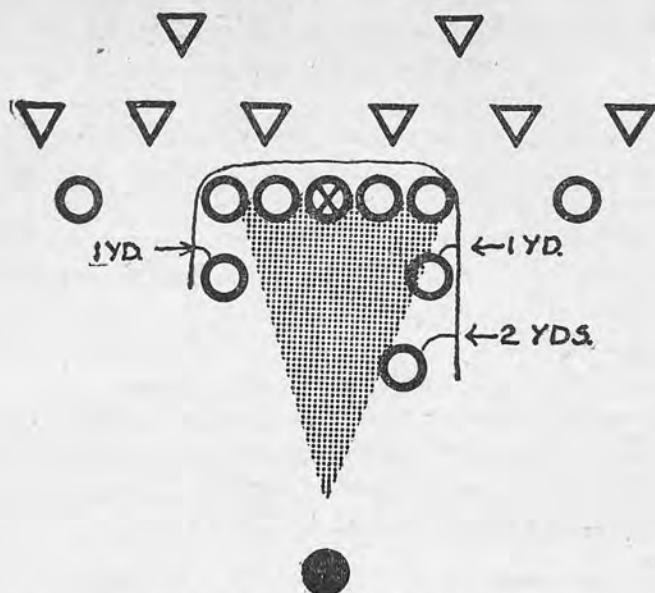


Chart 9: *Protecting the Kicker*

Shaded area is the *kicking zone*, which must be kept free of opponents to avoid a blocked punt.

The following points may be noted from a study of the diagram:

1. The five middle linemen are assigned to "hold the fort" against all comers. None will leave his territory until he is assured that no opponent is coming through.

2. Back No. 1 is prepared to close the gap between himself and his right tackle. No. 2 will close the gap between himself and his left tackle. No. 3 will glance to see if anyone is breaking through, then turn, close the gap between himself and No. 1.

1. As the ball is snapped, the Nos. 1 and 2 backs will bring their *inside* feet forward and pivot a quarter turn to the outside.

3. The offensive left end has widened the split between himself and his left tackle, and the defensive right end has gone out with him. From the position pictured, the defensive right end cannot reach the kicking area in time to block the punt; there-

fore the left end merely steps toward him with his left foot, forcing him to take the outside course, and goes immediately downfield to cover the punt.

4. The offensive right end also can go downfield immediately, as there are two blockers on his side to handle the defensive left tackle and left end.

5. If these assignments are carried out as charted, the kicking area will be kept clear. (The punter will move into the protected zone with his step-and-a-half advance.)

Suppose, however, that just before the ball is snapped, the defensive right end slips *inside* the offensive left end.

The enemy's plan will become obvious from a study of Chart 10. The defensive right tackle (b) will drive inside the No. 2 back, forcing him to block toward the line. The right end (a) then will have a straight shot at the kicker's foot.

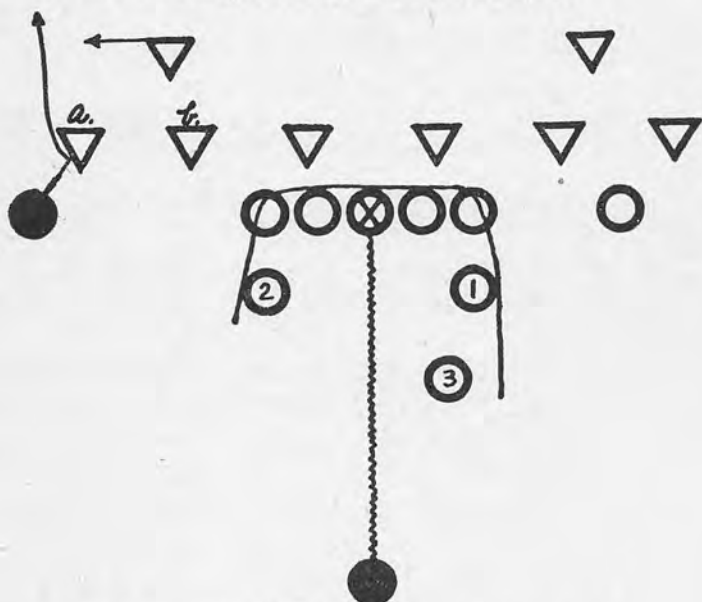


Chart 10: *End Checking before Covering Punt*

If more than one opponent lines up between him and his tackle, left end must check before covering.

The remedy is almost equally obvious: The offensive left end will have to participate in the protection. He will ram into the defensive end with a shoulder, check him momentarily and then go downfield. The No. 2 back will "keep the gate closed" as before, forcing all traffic to the outside.

This, then, is a good rule-of-thumb for the offensive ends: In punt formation they keep glancing down the line of scrimmage. If the left end sees more than *one* opponent between himself and his left tackle, he must check the nearest man before going down under the kick. If the right end sees more than *two* men between himself and his right tackle, he must check the nearest man before going downfield.

The punter can be of great help by observing the situation himself and proceeding accordingly: (1) If he sees that one of his ends will have to block in the line, he directs his punt to the other side of the field; (2) if the opposing line is fully "loaded" and both ends must block in the line, he attempts to kick out of bounds.

Speaking of out-of-bounds kicks, sometimes they bring on a variation from the standard protection pattern just described. If kicking on the opponents' side of the 50, the punter often takes an angled position rather than one directly behind his center. If kicking for the left sideline, he might stand behind his right tackle and face at a 30- or 45-degree left angle. Obviously there is more danger now of the punt's being blocked from the *right* side of the defensive line. The No. 3 back moves over to the *left* side to help the No. 2, leaving No. 1 to pick up sharp-angling rushers from the other side.

Punt protectors must stay on their feet and use their shoulders. The middle linemen keep the base of the kicking triangle firm with their shoulder-to-shoulder wall. They block high enough that opposing players cannot leap over them into the kicking area, and *they do not leave their territory to pursue opponents.*

The protecting backs always force opponents to the outside

by keeping their heads on the *inside* of the men they block. When the backs block in this manner, they jam up the gap so that a second opponent attempting to slice through the same opening cannot get through.

**Quick Kicks.**—On quick kicks the middle linemen should charge aggressively shoulder to shoulder, moving defensive players back. The frontback and fullback (Nos. 2 and 3 backs) move quickly into position to pick up opponents slicing off the extremities of the midline wall. Ends and wingbacks sprint downfield to cover the kick, and the blockers follow as soon as they can. A sample of quick kick protection and coverage is shown in Chart 11.

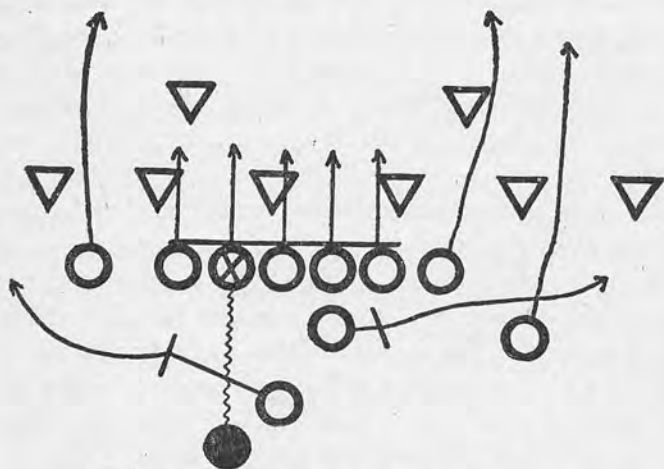


Chart 11: *Quick Kick Protection and Coverage*  
From single wingback formation, unbalanced line.

#### COVERING THE KICK

In the discussion of punter protection, some mention already has been made of kick coverage. Although coverage is secondary to protection, it is of vast importance. It benefits us little

if our punter boots the ball 45 yards and the opponents bring it back 30.

The punt coverers go down in waves. As noted, the ends are in the first wave unless they are required to block on the line. It is impossible to set a hard and fast rule on punt coverage for the five middle linemen. Their paramount responsibility is to wall up the base of the kicking area; yet if one of these men finds no opponent in front of him—in other words, if he has nothing to do on the line of scrimmage—he will go down in the first wave.

Other players who have only a check-blocking job to do will go down as the second wave.

When the kicker's toe thuds against the ball, the remaining protectors will go down as the third wave. Generally speaking, the waves will perform as follows:

1. Members of the first wave will go down wide, with the intention of forcing the punt-catcher to go up the middle.
2. Members of the second wave will head directly for the ball.
3. Members of the third wave will fan out and cover the width of the field, backing up the first and second waves.
4. The punter will stay back as safety man.

Taking the situation pictured in Chart 9, page 71, with the opposition rushing normally, the probable manner of coverage would be as shown in Chart 12, page 76.

Some hints for kick-covering players:

1. Ends and other members of the first wave may need to use tactics similar to those of a broken-field runner to evade the receiving team's halfbacks.
2. First-wave men must not be fooled by the faking of clever safety men and halfbacks, who will often "put on an act" of receiving the ball when they are not doing so. The covering players must look and locate the ball promptly and determine by whom it can be played.



3. There must be no hesitancy or loafing on the part of any member of the kicking team. When the protecting assignment is completed, cover the kick!

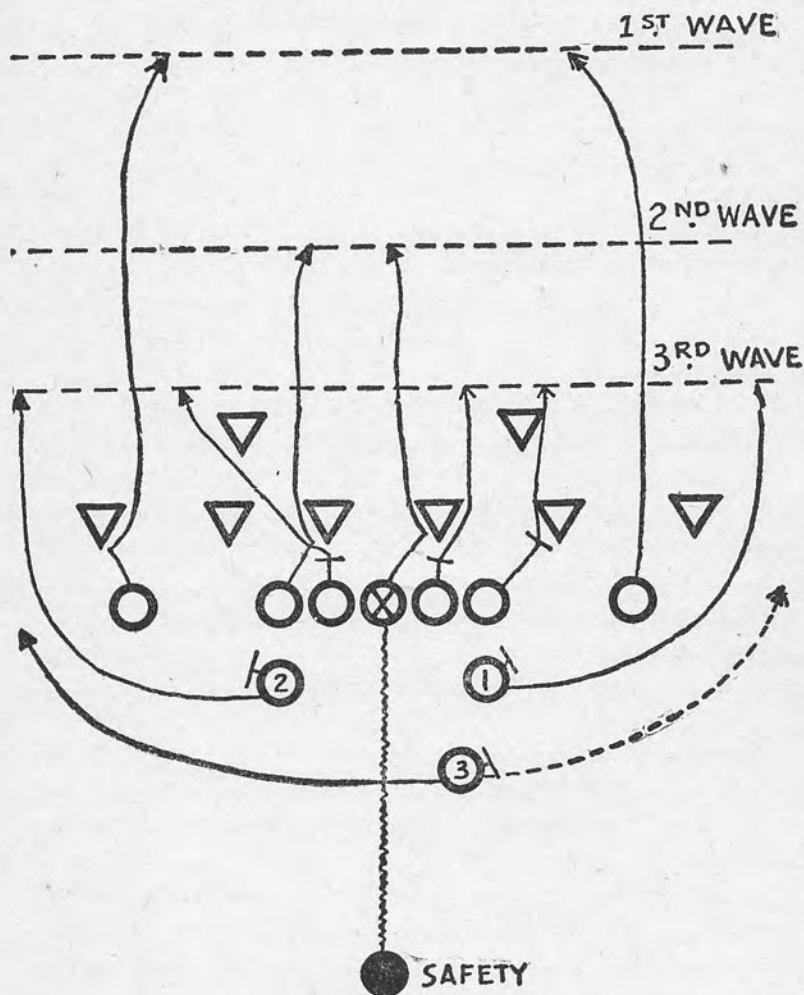


Chart 12: *Covering the Punt—in Waves*

## RETURNING THE PUNT

*Receivers.*—The punt receiver, like an outfielder in baseball, must be able to judge the flight of the ball and to handle it surely and confidently. He must be able to take the ball from a comfortable, relaxed stationary position or on the run. He reaches for the ball, bringing it in with a "giving" motion, and pins it to his body with his hands. The ball falls into a pocket formed by the hands, arms and body.

The safety man must concentrate on the ball until he has caught it and has it under full control. His first direction is straight up the field, because he does not know exactly where his blockers and the defensive men are located. Even if the return plan calls for him to go wide, his first few steps should be up the middle. This action draws the tacklers toward him and makes the blocking angles better.

The punt receiver needs to be a player of poise and sound judgment. Safety is no place for a jittery player. He must make a quick, definite decision: If he is going to handle the punt, he goes for it without reservation; if not, he gives it plenty of room. It is foolish for any player to get close to a punted ball unless he is going to play it. Many games have been lost because the safety man was indecisive in handling a punt, or because some player on the receiving team carelessly allowed a bouncing punt to touch him.

Three good general rules for the punt-receiver are:

1. Handle all low kicks.
2. Let long kicks roll over the goal for touchbacks, *and don't change your mind!*
3. Don't handle short, high kicks.

An exception to the last rule might be made on a short, high kick near and in front of the opponents' goal posts. In that case the safety man would signal for a fair catch. He should never try to handle a high punt in a crowd except by the fair catch route.

The safety man's depth on kicking downs will be regulated by the wind, the punter's ability, position on the field and his own ability to come up or go back for the catch. The normal position is 35 or 40 yards from the line of scrimmage. These suggestions regarding his position may be helpful:

1. On any down except fourth, take minimum depth and be ready to come up fast. It may be a pass in front of you.

2. Don't take a position back of your own 10-yard line. If the ball is kicked that far, let it go over the goal for a touch-back.

3. If opponents are kicking from the side of the field, favor the near sideline. The punter will attempt to kick the ball out of bounds.

4. If you fumble a punt, fall on the ball immediately unless you are dead sure you have time to pick it up and make appreciable headway.

5. Except under emergency conditions (such as late in the game, your team behind), don't take long gambles on punts. A lost fumble on a punt is disastrous—not only do you lose the ball, but the kicking team will be about 40 yards closer to your goal line.

6. Concentrate on the tailback in any formation. He may tip off his intention to quick-kick.

*The Return Plan.*—Punts may be returned (1) at the receiver's option or (2) according to a prearranged plan. In either case the receiving team must "make it safe," keeping in mind the possibility that the play will be a run or a pass, even on fourth down. The earlier the down, the stronger the possibility of a fake kick play.

If no signal is given indicating a definite return plan, the halfbacks drop back with the covering ends and stay between them and the safety man. For two reasons they do not usually attempt to block the ends near the line of scrimmage: (1) The play might be a wide run or a pass into their territory, and (2) the ends would have time to recover and perhaps make the

tackle. It is a good general rule that the closer to the punt receiver a block can be safely made, the better. The opponent blocked at that point is definitely out of the play, and the chance of getting a good block is improved because he is concentrating on the receiver.

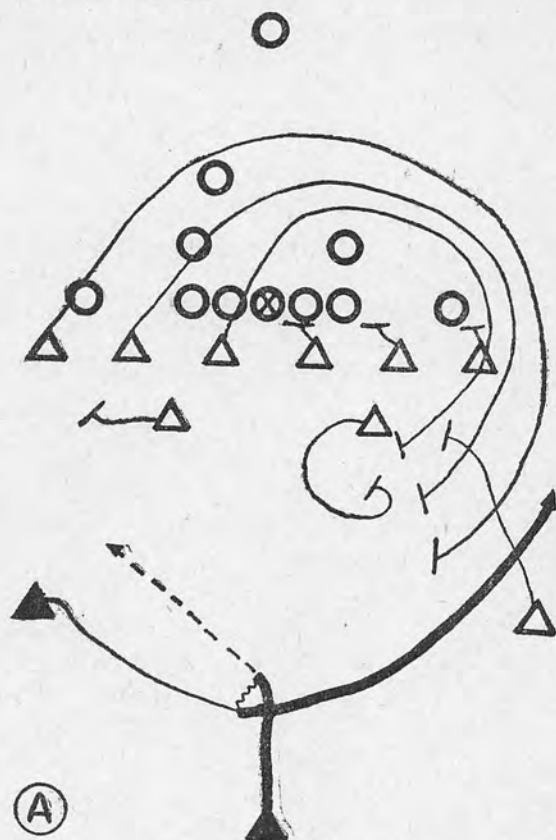


Chart 13: *Returning the Punt*

(A) Right sideline return, with handoff. (See also B, C and D.)

Sometimes the line-backers will block the ends as they come out, throwing them off stride and making it easier for the half-backs.

The linemen who rush the kicker should recover quickly and circle back into position to block away from the returner's path. Linemen who do not rush the kicker will jam up the kicking team's line, preventing fast coverage of the punt, and will then drop back to help in the blocking.

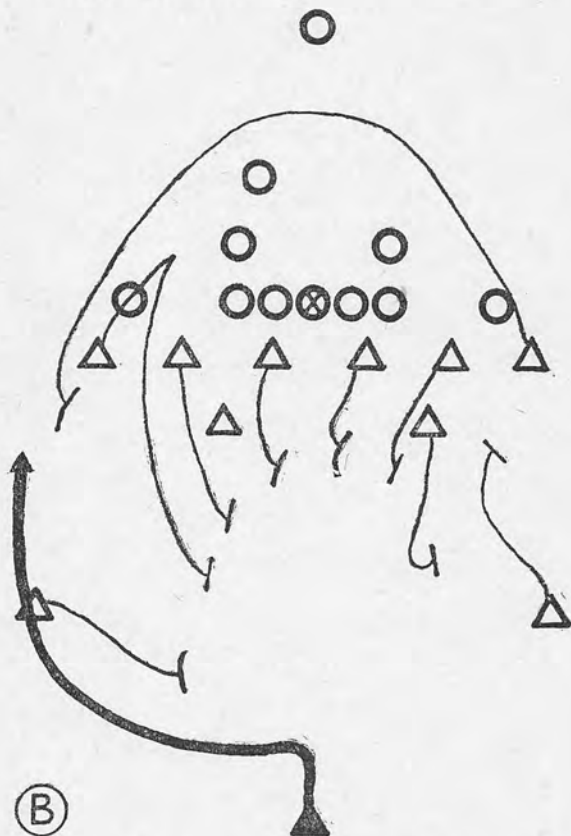


Chart 13: *Returning the Punt*  
(B) Left sideline return. (See also A, C and D.)

The punt receiver, after choosing his direction, should run directly at the approaching end. As the halfback blocks the end in or out, the ball-carrier breaks to the open side.

If the safety man catches a punt near the sideline, he will almost always make a longer return by heading up the sideline than by swinging out into the open field.

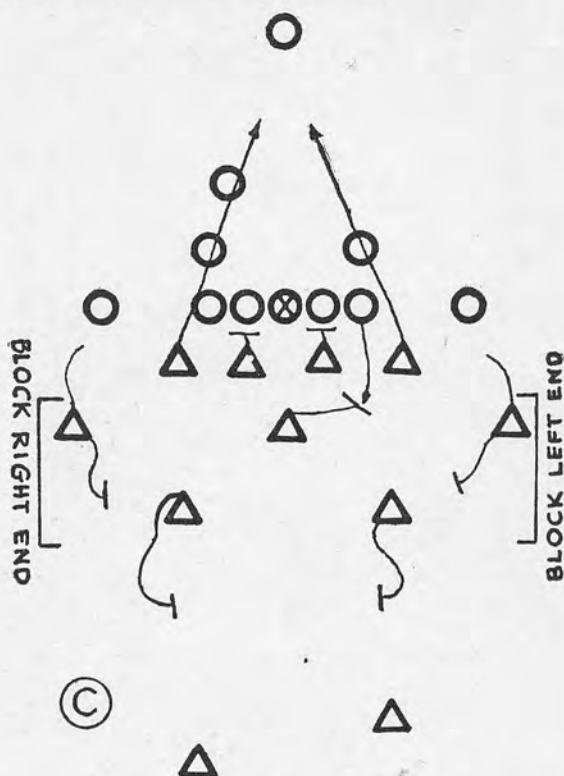


Chart 13: *Returning the Punt*

(C) Double safety—return to either side or criss-cross, with handoff or fake handoff. (See also A, B and D.)

A wide variety of planned returns is possible, many of them incorporating a criss-cross in which the original receiver hands off or laterals the ball to another back or fakes such an exchange. Some of the possibilities are noted in Chart 13.

The signal for a planned return will be given by the defensive quarterback by word, number or hand signal.



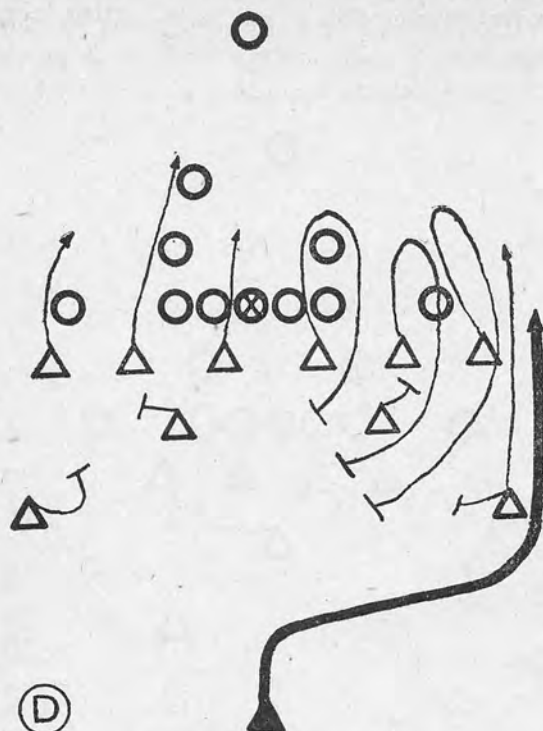


Chart 13: *Returning the Punt*  
(D) Tennessee punt return to right. (See also A, B and C.)

#### BLOCKING THE PUNT

As rushing the passer is the one most effective method of pass defense, so is rushing the punter one of the best defenses against the punt. If the kick is not blocked, hard rushing still will hurry the kicker and perhaps force him to kick high, short and inaccurately.

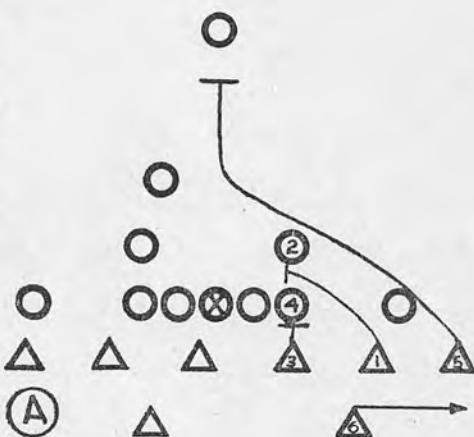
The defending team must never forget the possibility that it may not be a kick, after all. Whatever tactics are used in rushing the kicker, adjustments must be made in the defense so that a surprise run or pass will not be fatal.

(By the same token, a team that does not always wait until fourth down to punt and which has a good repertoire of plays from deep punt formation will usually be given plenty of time to get its kicks away. A series of deep-punt plays will be found in Chart 31, page 112.)

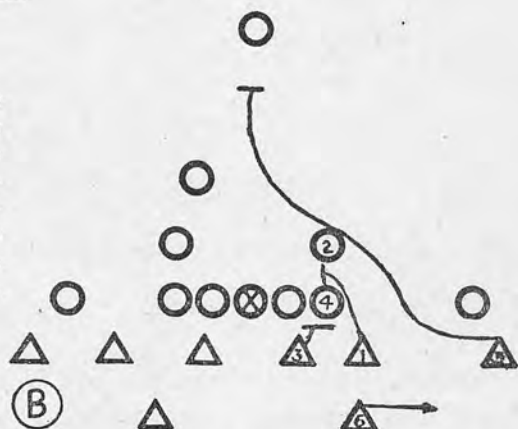
Chart 14:

*Punt-blocking Stunts*

(A) Right End Blocking—defensive right tackle (1) charges to inside of protecting back (2) as defensive right guard (3) engages offensive left tackle (4). As protecting back is forced to engage tackle, defensive right end (5) slices behind him and into the kicking lane. Line-backer (6) moves over to protect against a fake-kick-and-run, as soon as the ball goes to the tailback.



(B) Variation—same stunt as (A), except right defensive end has been drawn out by offensive left end. Defensive end maneuvers to dart inside offensive end as ball is snapped. (See also C and D.)



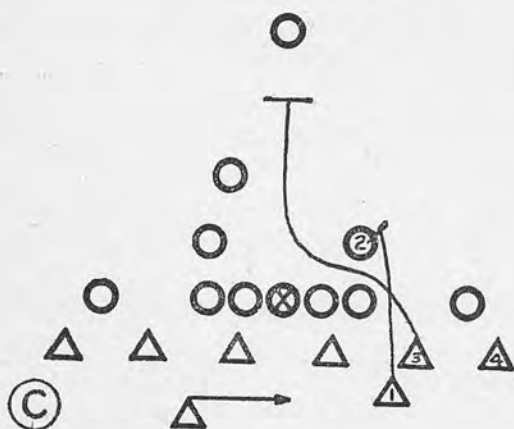
If there is no special plan for blocking the punt, this rule should be followed: If the ends rush, the tackles protect terri-

tory, and vice versa. They should have signals so that there will be no confusion among them.

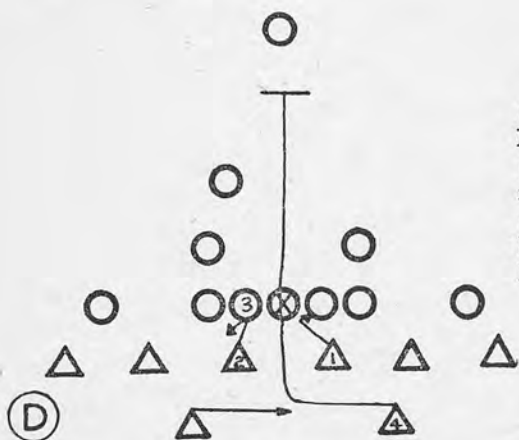
Chart 14:

### Punt-blocking Stunts

(C) Right Tackle Blocking—line-backer (1) moves up into line just before play starts and slices inside his own right tackle, engaging protecting back (2) and pulling him out of position so defensive right tackle (3) can break inside him into kicking lane.



(D) Line-backer Through Middle—defensive guards (1 and 2) engage offensive right guard (3) and center (x), opening gap for line-backer (4) to shoot into kicking lane. (See also A and B.)



When a defensive player gets free in the kicking area, he moves immediately into line with the kicker's foot and drives for it, trying to put his hands over the ball. The rusher must remember that if he is unsuccessful in blocking the kick, he must bend every effort to avoid running into the kicker.

## THE PLACE KICK

## HOW TO PLACE-KICK

The place kick, in which one player holds the ball perpendicularly on the ground while another attempts to boot it over the cross-bar, is by far the most popular method of making the point after touchdown. Place-kicked field goals also are common and some players, particularly professionals, have become amazingly proficient.

Three players are key men in the place kick—the center, the holder and the kicker. The rest of the team must present a solid wall to the opposition.

The first task is to locate a smooth spot on which to place the ball. This spot should be about seven yards behind the line of scrimmage. The holder marks it with a bit of adhesive tape or some brown grass.

The kicker now checks his alignment. Whatever the angle of the kick, the ball must be placed and the kicker positioned so that the swing of his leg will be directed toward the center of the cross-bar. For short kicks he stands one short step behind the spot where the ball is to be placed.

If the kicker is right-footed, the holder puts his left knee on the ground and extends his right leg toward the line of scrimmage. He extends his hands toward the center as far as he can comfortably, fingers spread and relaxed.

The center must pass the ball low and fast to the holder's hands. The holder immediately places the ball on the designated spot and holds it upright with the fingers of either hand.

Meanwhile the kicker has never taken his eye off the spot. As the ball is placed he steps with his left foot, planting it almost even with and about four inches to the left of the ball. He swings his kicking leg through a perpendicular arc. Most of the impetus comes from the straightening of the kicking leg, which is well bent at the knee as the swing starts.

If the kicker likes, he may take a tiny preliminary step with the right (kicking) foot to initiate his advance.

The kicker's toe should hit the ball about three inches from the ground. Many kickers hit the ball too low.

The kicking surface on a hard-toed shoe can be prepared by kicking it against a concrete wall.

On longer place kicks, the kicker may find it necessary to take one or more extra steps. The kicker, the holder and the center should work together regularly to perfect their execution and timing.

As a final word to the place-kicker, it is well to repeat the golfing axiom: Head down, eye on the ball. An effective and practical reminder is the habit of holding a portion of the jersey front in the mouth while kicking.

These are the place-kicker's "right" moves: (1) Line up right; (2) hit the ball right; (3) follow through right.

#### PROTECTION

A "tight" line is used to protect the place-kicker. The half-backs should locate one yard out from the ends and one yard back. They pivot forward with the inside foot and become a part of the wall, their responsibility being to close the gap between them and the ends. (See Chart 15.)

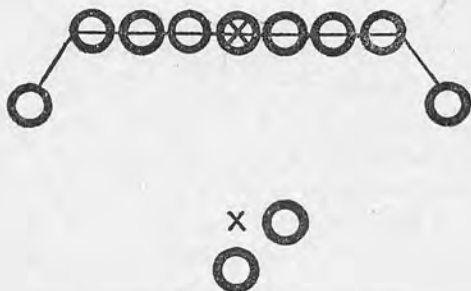


Chart 15: *Protecting the Place-kicker*

*Field goal tries must be covered.* The linemen hold until the ball is kicked and then go downfield. The backs should follow as a second wave, except for the holder who acts as safety.

#### THE DROP KICK

The drop kick, somewhat of a football rarity nowadays, is made by dropping the ball to the ground over the kicking toe and kicking it the instant it bounces. The drop is very important and should be made with hands as close to the ground as possible. Both hands should be released at the same time. Most drop-kickers let the ball hit the ground on the point. The foot strikes the ball below the middle. Instructions as to lining up for the drop kick, keeping the eye on the ball and following through are the same as for the place kick.

The protection likewise is the same, except that an extra back is available to pick up any opponent who breaks through the front line.

### THE KICKOFF

#### ITS VALUE

A team superior to its opponent in kicking off and returning kickoffs is likely to pick up a decided advantage in the course of an autumn afternoon.

Suppose that Team A, after kicking off, is able to stop Team B inside the latter's 30-yard line. Chances are Team A will soon have the ball, after receiving a punt, somewhere near its own 40—in offensive territory. A kickoff man who can blast the ball out of the end zone is the best bet. Next best is a team that covers the kickoff swiftly and competently.

On the other hand, a receiving team with a well-organized plan for returning the ball often can bring it out past its 35-



yard line—sometimes farther. Ten yards can make a lot of difference on a kickoff return; it may be the difference between defensive and offensive position.

#### KICKING AND COVERING

The kickoff is a glorified place kick. The kicker backs up five to ten yards to muster power and momentum. He adjusts his stride so as to run through the ball without slowing up. The ball-holder becomes the safety man.

The other nine men line up on their 35-yard line (the ball being kicked from the 40) and trail the kicker slightly so as not to be offside.

It is advisable to cover the kickoff in two waves. The fastest men go down the sides and middle. More often than not, the kickoff receiver will start up the middle of the field. The fast middlemen in the first wave will force him to "show" quickly.

The fast outside men will turn the runner in and converge on him as quickly as is safe. If the runner gets past these six or seven tacklers, the second wave will be in position to pick him up.

As it is imperative to keep the runner from breaking out and up the sideline, it is a good idea to use the ends as the outside men in the first wave. They are accustomed to protecting to their outside and are usually the fastest linemen. They must cover their territory on the kickoff and get back into their paths quickly if they leave them to evade blockers.

The second men from the sidelines also should be speedsters, probably backs. Other fast men should go down on either side of the kicker. The slowest men should be placed third from the outsides.

This method of covering kickoffs is preferable to the one-line method in which all 10 men go down the field together, keeping their courses until they start to converge on the runner. This method gives well-spaced coverage of the field, but if one

man is blocked or converges too quickly, a yawning gap will be opened and only the safety man will stand between the runner and a touchdown.

Whatever the coverage method used, each man should go down determined to tackle the ball-carrier. The outside men, however, must temper their enthusiasm and remember their responsibility for turning the runner away from the sideline and into the arms of their teammates.

Chart 16 shows the team covering a kickoff in waves.

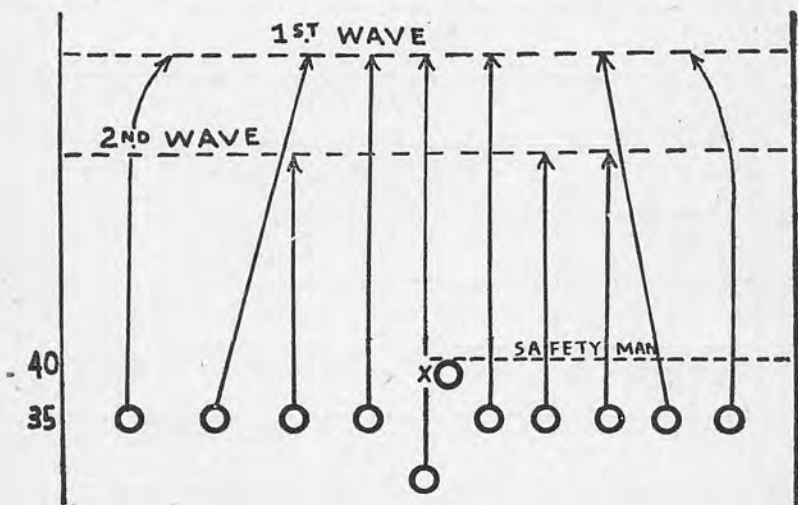


Chart 16: *Covering the Kickoff—in Waves*

#### RETURNING THE KICKOFF

Disposition of players to receive the kickoff is shown in Chart 17.

The kickoff is a free kick and must always be played by the receiving team—even if it goes across the goal line. It may be downed in the end zone for a touchback, but the kicking team may recover it there for a touchdown.

A majority of kickoffs will be returned up the middle of the

field; some will be returned up the sideline. For up-the-middle returns, a team will use either the *wedge* method—Chart 18-A—or the cross-blocking method—Chart 18-B.

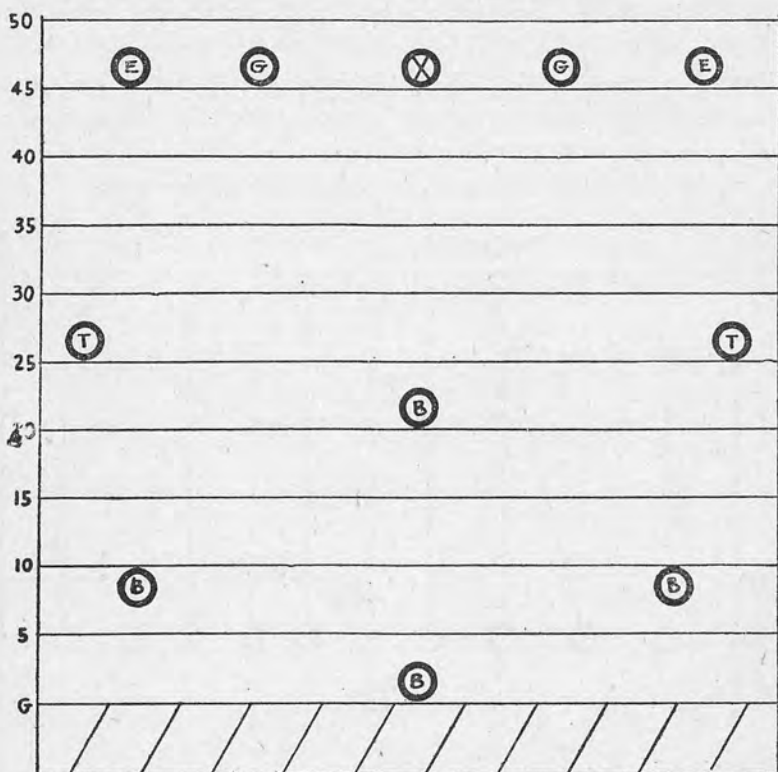


Chart 17: Receiving the Kickoff

Various methods are used for sideline returns, two of which are shown in Charts 18-C and -D.

The sideline return is often marked by an exchange of the ball by handoff or lateral, or the faking of an exchange. Chart 19 depicts some maneuvers by which the three back receivers may vary their returns to the possible confusion of the opponents.

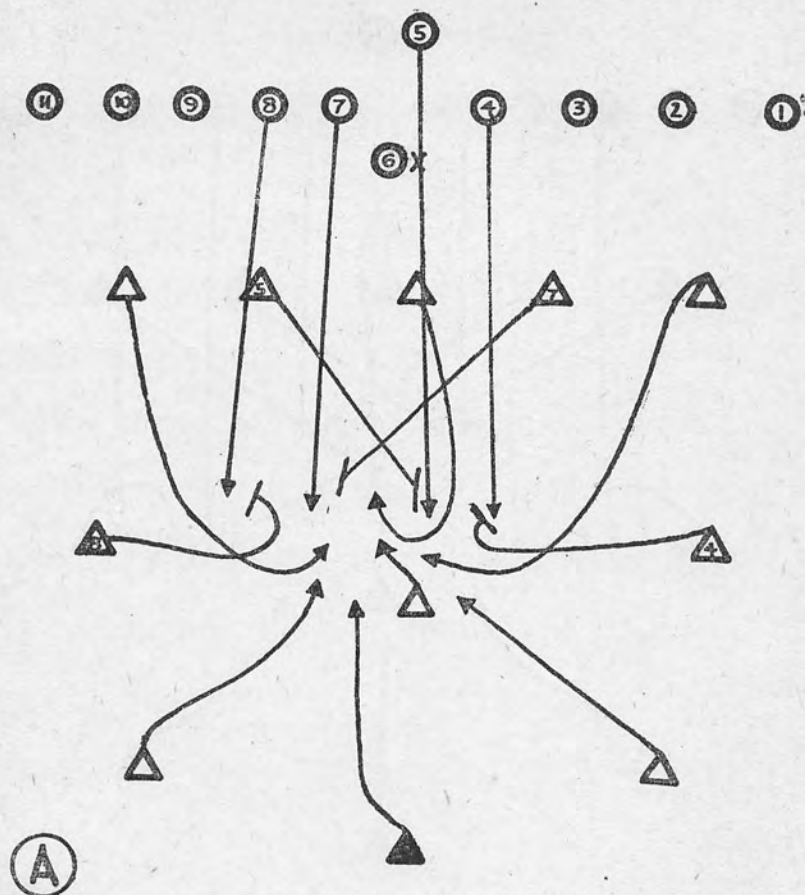
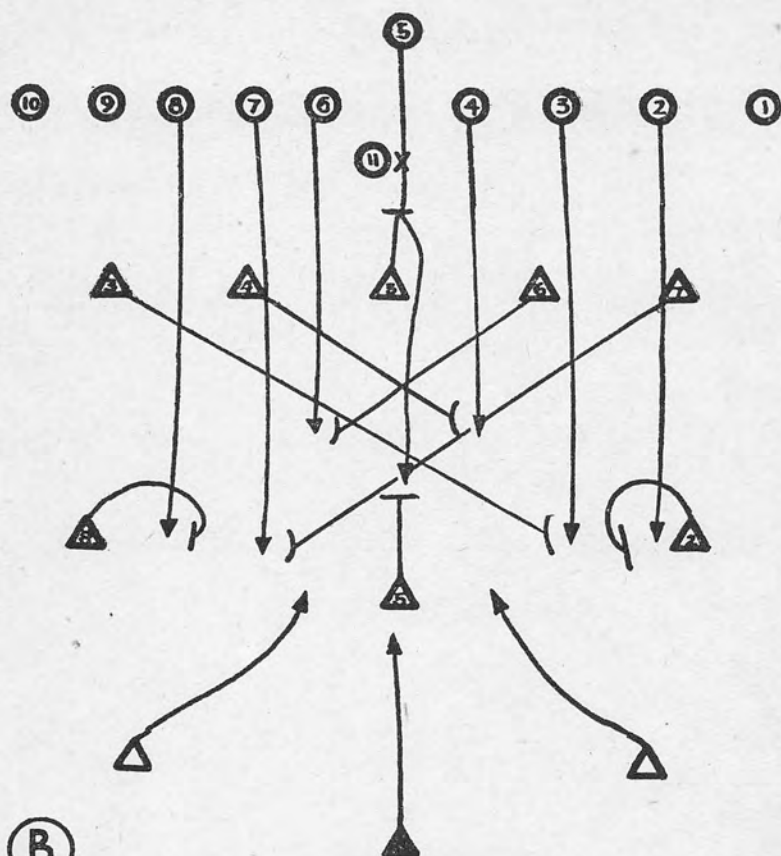


Chart 18: *Returning the Kickoff*  
 (A) Wedge return up the middle. (See also B, C and D.)

Chart 18: *Returning the Kickoff*

(B) Cross-blocking, return up the middle. (See also A, C and D.)

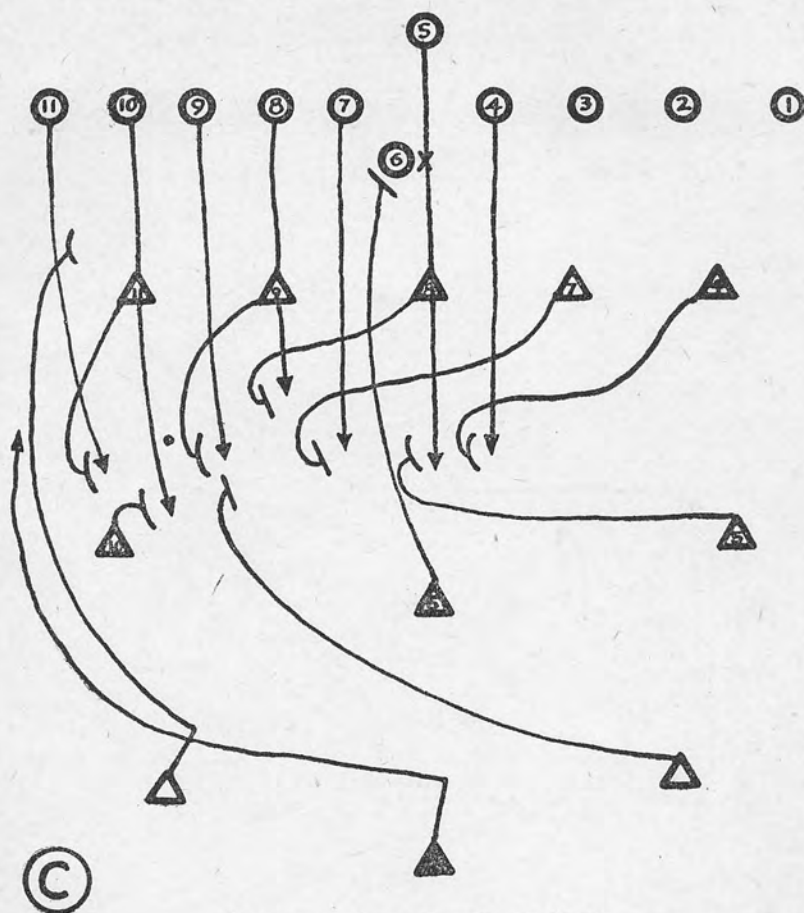


Chart 18: *Returning the Kickoff*  
 (C) Left sideline return. (See also A, B and D.)



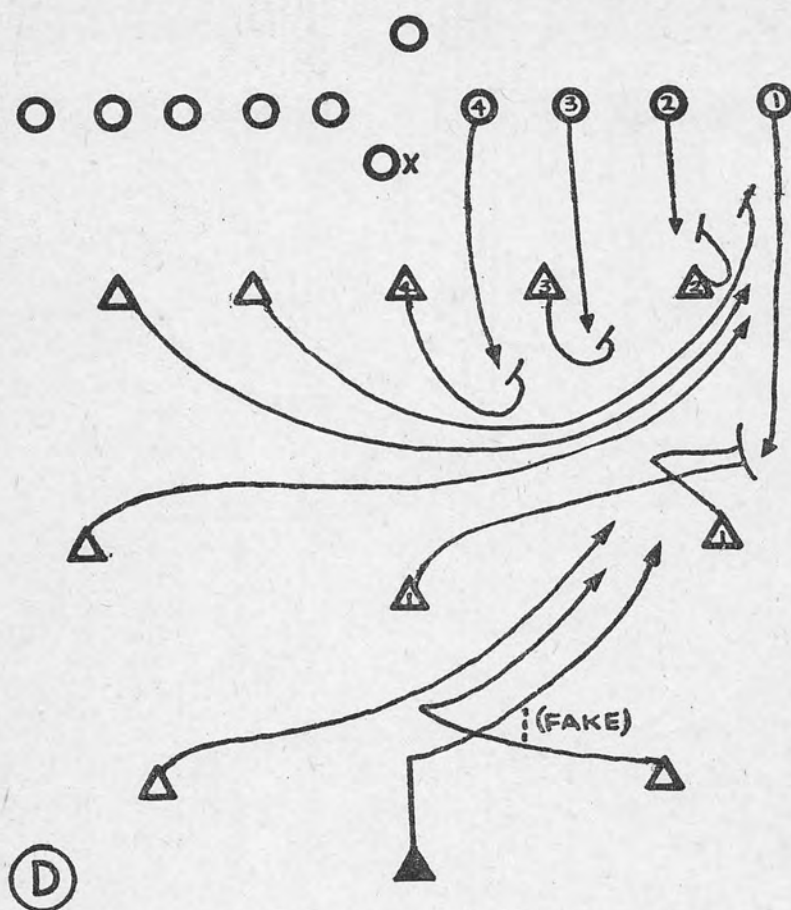


Chart 18: *Returning the Kickoff*  
 (D) Right sideline return. (See also A, B and C.)

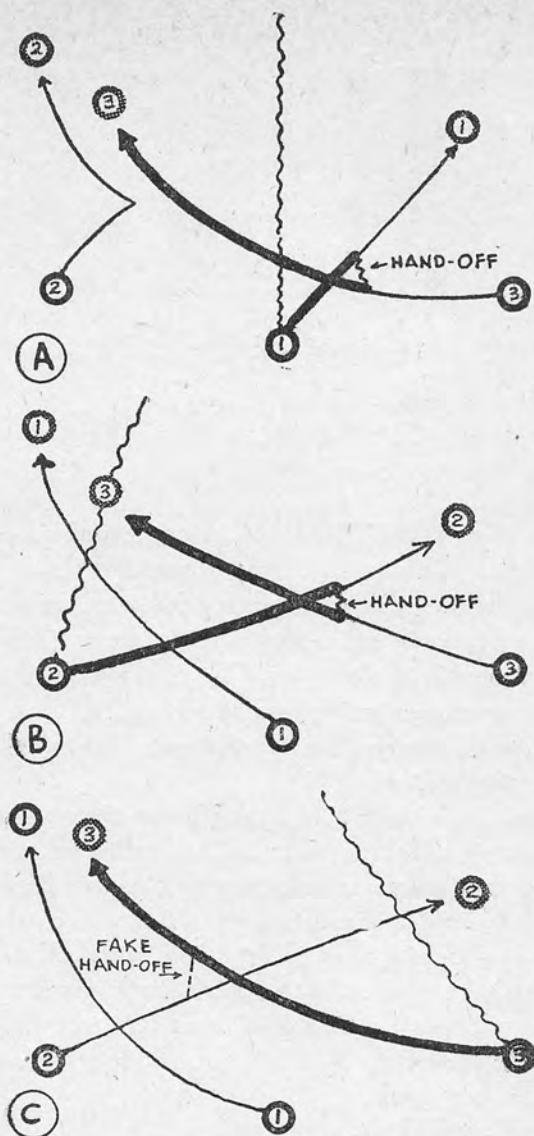


Chart 19: *Handoff Sequence*

Three ways for No. 3 to return kickoff up left sideline; (A) Ball to No. 1, handoff to No. 3; (B) Ball to No. 2, handoff to No. 3; (C) Ball to No. 3, fake handoff to No. 2. In reverse, the same three ways may be used for No. 2 to return the kickoff up the right sideline.

## *Going Into Action*

WE HAVE STUDIED blocking, running, passing and kicking—component parts of the offense.

To translate these factors into touchdowns, we must have an orderly, systematic plan for putting them into execution. Therefore we will need:

1. One or more *starting formations*.
2. Cycles of *plays* off each formation.
3. A *signal system*.

A formation is merely an arrangement of 11 football players in accordance with the rules and the theories of the coach. Down through the years many formations have been tested and discarded or declared satisfactory. Every formation has its strong points and its weak points. The soundest, naturally, are those with maximum strength, minimum weakness.

The four formation "families" that have proved most satisfactory are:

1. Single wingback.
2. Double wingback.
3. Punt.
4. T formation.

Each of these standard formations has its closely related variations, and there are dozens of other formations. Radical or un-

usual formations often are very strong in one or two respects, glaringly weak in others. The four formations mentioned above, and their near relations, afford a comparatively high degree of balance and versatility of attack. The coach will choose a formation to fit (1) his personnel and (2) his theories as to the most generally effective setup. He may use two or three formations. If he does, he should have a well-developed, complete attack from each.

## FORMATIONS

### SINGLE WINGBACK

*Formation.*—Chart 20 shows four versions of the single wingback formation. Two of these use an unbalanced line (four men on one side of the center, two on the other), while two are shown with a balanced line. In all cases, however, the distinguishing feature is the placing of one of the backs in a flanking position. The other three backs remain in position to take a direct pass from center.

It is necessary to say a word about the positions of linemen in the unbalanced line. We will use the nomenclature of the balanced line, which is from left to right: left end, left tackle, left guard, center, right guard, right tackle, right end.

In the unbalanced line to the right, the ends remain at the extremes. The left guard retains his position next to the center. The right tackle stays to the inside of the right end. The left tackle moves to the right side of the line, usually dropping in between the right guard and right tackle. Some coaches prefer, however, to place him next to the center. In that slot he will be directly in front of a defensive guard when facing an over-shifted six-man line and can do a good job of check-blocking when the guard to his right pulls out.

The single wingback formations shown in the chart are un-

balanced to the *right*, making that the "strong" or "long" side and the left the "weak" or "short" side. These formations may be inverted so that the left becomes the "strong side."

It is best to invert the line as well as the backfield. That is,

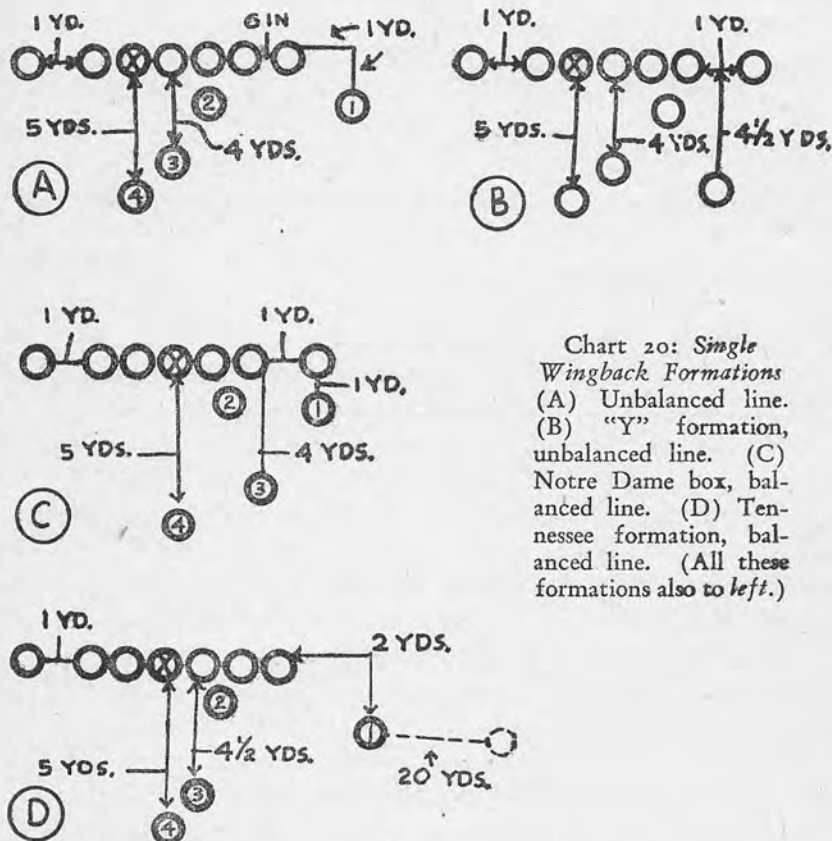


Chart 20: *Single Wingback Formations*  
 (A) Unbalanced line.  
 (B) "Y" formation, unbalanced line.  
 (C) Notre Dame box, balanced line.  
 (D) Tennessee formation, balanced line. (All these formations also to left.)

the left end (in single wing right) will become the right end, the left guard the right guard, and so on, when the team goes into formation left. Thus the same two men will always be on the short side and the same four on the long side of center. Blocking assignments will remain identical, except that they

will be executed in reverse. This turnover method makes it possible to have the same play right and left without each man's having to learn it twice. (This statement does not apply to the Notre Dame box or other formations which strengthen right or left according to a shift of the backs.)

*Evaluation.*—Here are some of the strong points of the single wingback formation:

1. With seven men positioned on one side of the ball and two more even with it, the formation is obviously built for power plays to the strong side.

2. With a wingback flanking the defensive tackle on the strong side, a strong off-tackle play can be developed. (See Chapter III for a discussion of end-wingback teamwork against the tackle.) Likewise a good strong-side end run is potentially possible.

3. A good cycle of spinner plays is possible, with the ball going to the No. 3 back who can fake or hand the ball to No. 4 or No. 1.

4. It is a fine formation for short passes, as four eligible receivers are in position to get open quickly (the ends, No. 1 and No. 2 backs).

5. It is a good quick kick formation, as the kicker has much protection on his kicking side.

Now for some of the single wingback's potential shortcomings:

1. The weak side attack is likely to be just that—weak. It is hard to get much power in front of the ball toward the short side. For that reason the defense is inclined to over-shift toward the strong side, making it harder to work strong-side plays.

2. The pass protection is potentially unbalanced, a fact that may make it difficult to protect the passer on long throws when considerable delay is involved.

3. Except for the spinner cycle, it does not afford much opportunity for deception.



The weak side attack can be bolstered by (1) using a balanced line or (2) dropping the wingback some four yards behind the line of scrimmage as in the "Y." The wingback then will be in position to hit quickly to the short side on handoff plays. In both instances, however, the strong side attack is weakened to some extent.

This should be noted of both the strong points and shortcomings of the single wingback formation: They are *potential*. They are not necessarily *actual*. By no means are they inevitable.

Merely going into single wingback formation does not assure a team that it will run wild off tackle or overpower the opposition on strong side plays. Neither may the defense rest assured that the single wingback team will have an impotent weak side attack. With proper fundamentals, personnel, plays and execution, all kinds of plays can be made to work. Without these, none will work.

In discussing the strong and weak points of this and other formations, we simply mean that from any particular formation it is comparatively easy to do some things and comparatively hard to do others.

*Personnel.*—To take full advantages of its potentialities, the single wingback team ought to have:

1. A No. 4 back (tailback) who can run, pass and quick-kick—a "triple-threater." A team with only one outstanding back can exploit him well from the single wing. He is constantly in position to pass and quick-kick, and he can do most of the running.

2. A No. 3 back who is a fine ball-handler and good plunger.

3. Good blocking ends, No. 1 and No. 2 backs and tackles.

4. Fast No. 1 back to make short-side plays effective.

5. At least one fast, active guard and one fast tackle (or guard) to pull.

*Plays.*—See Charts 21-25 following.

# Legend

BALL CARRIER: ●

HANDOFF: ●

OTHER RUNNERS: ○

FAKE HANDOFF: =

MAN-IN-MOTION: ~

BLOCK: ———|

CENTER PASS-LATERALS: ~~~~~

BALL HANDLER: ⊙

FORWARD PASS-FAKE LATERALS: - - - - -

DEFENDER: △

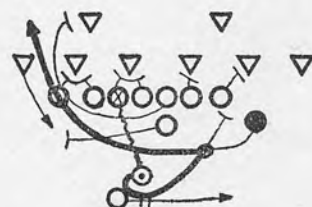
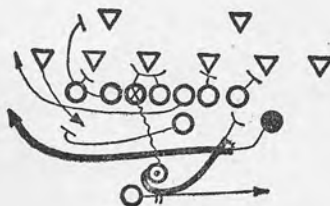
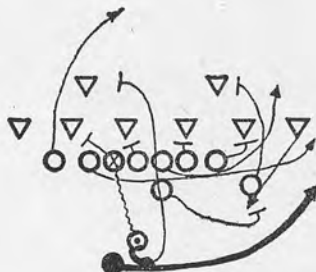
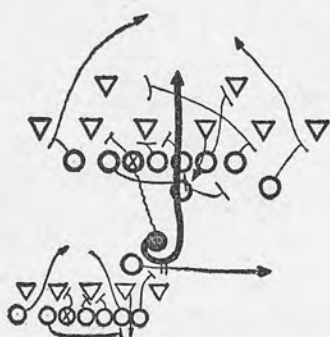
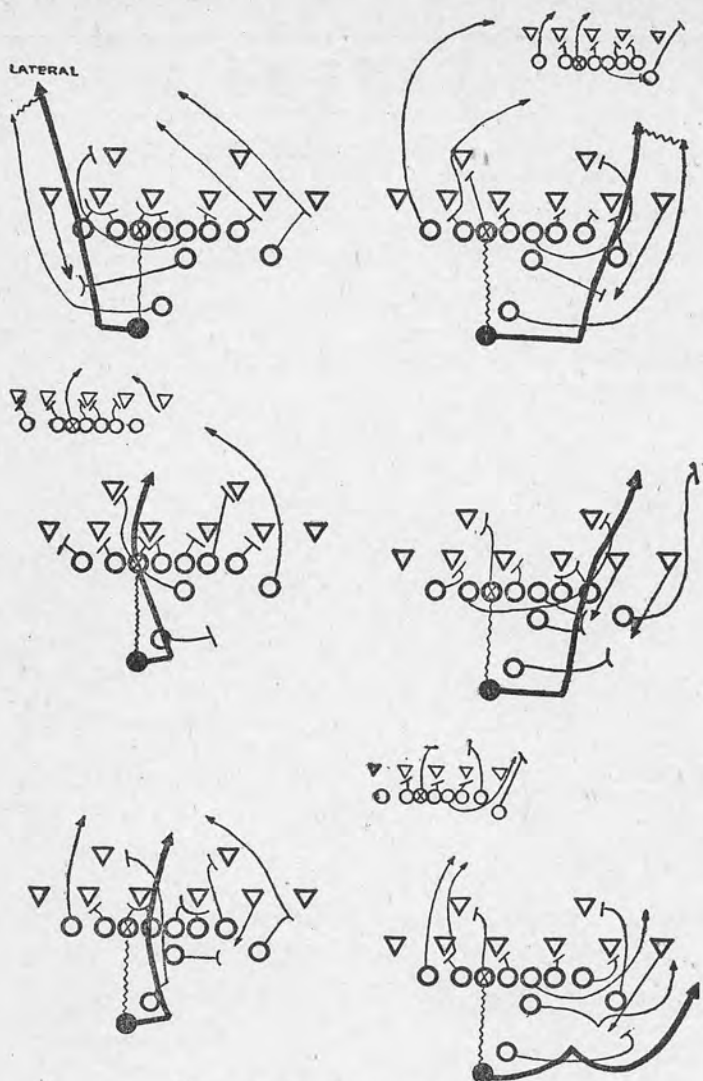


Chart 21: *Single Wing—Spins and Handoffs*

(Upper left) Spin over middle. (Upper right) Handoff—wide to long side. (Lower left) Handoff—wide to short side. (Lower right) Handoff—outside tackle, short side.

Chart 22: *Single Wing Cutbacks*

(Upper left) Outside tackle—short side. (Upper right) Outside tackle—long side. (Middle left) Inside tackle—short side. (Middle right) Inside tackle—long side. (Lower left) Over the middle. (Lower right) In-and-out.

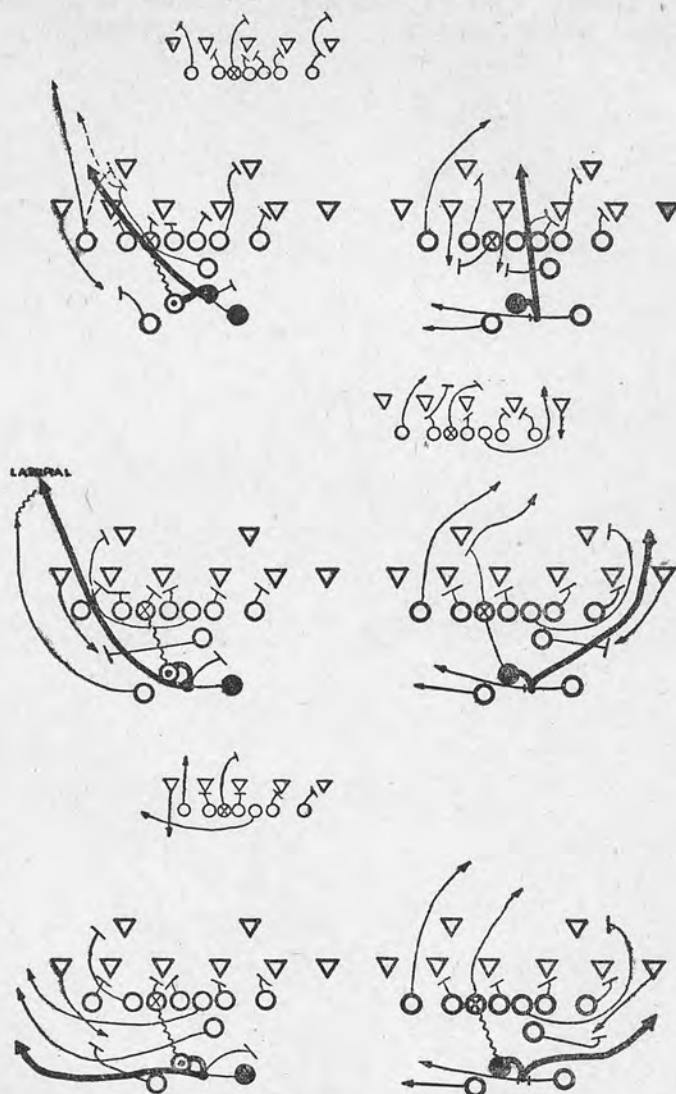


Chart 23: "Y" Reverses and Fake Reverses

(Upper left) Reverse inside tackle. (Upper right) Fake reverse—trap.  
 (Middle left) Reverse outside tackle. (Middle right) Fake reverse outside tackle.  
 (Lower left) Reverse outside end. (Lower right) Fake reverse outside end.

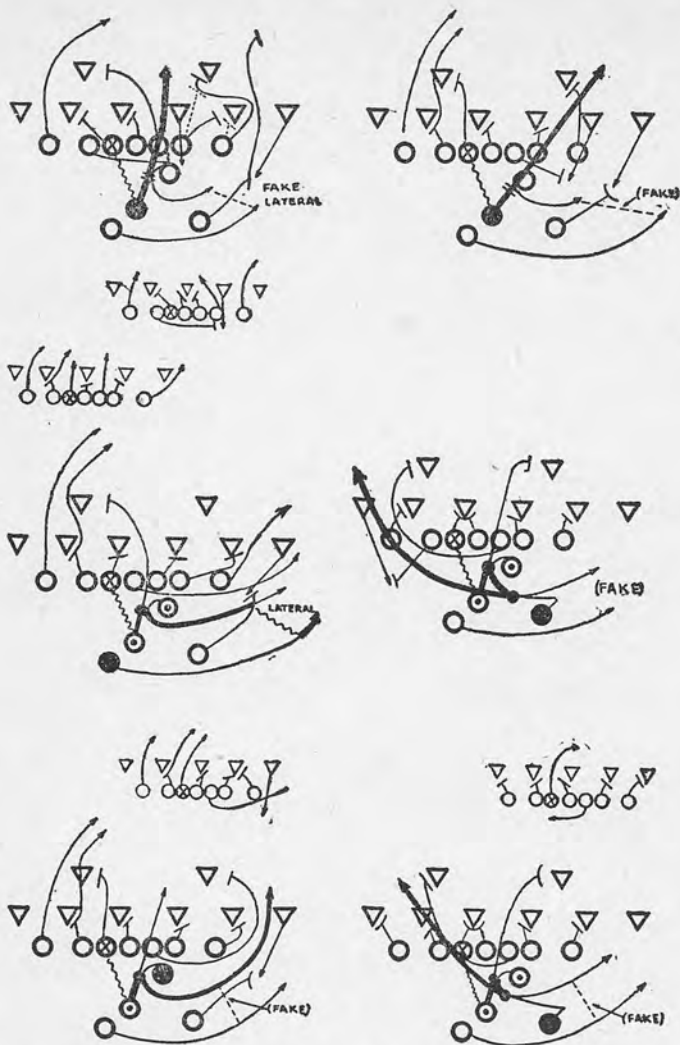
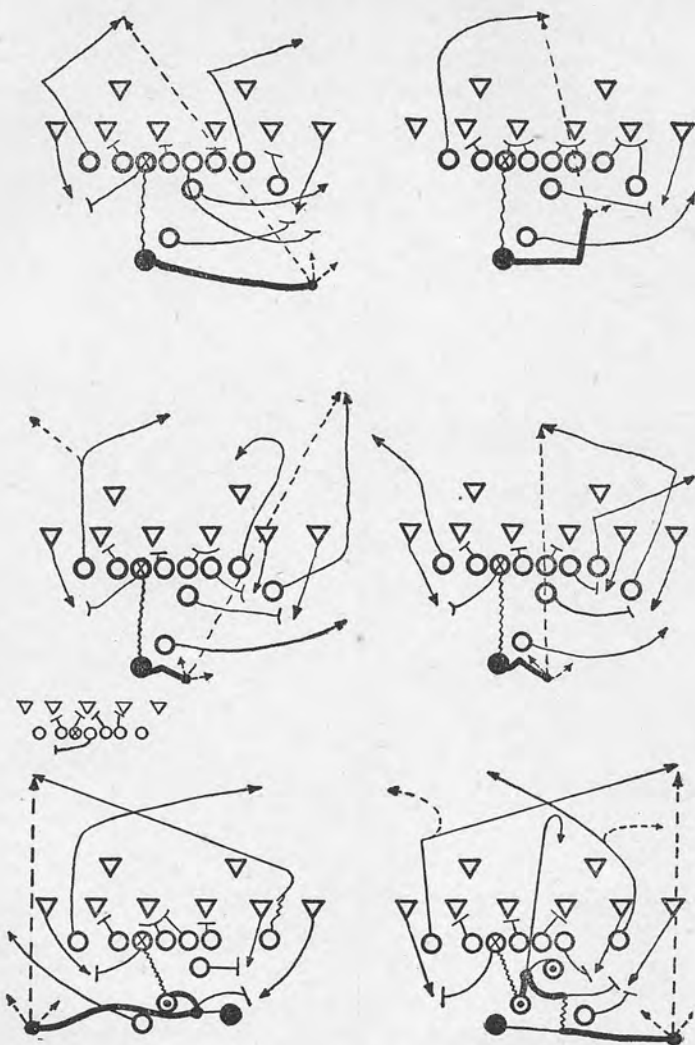


Chart 24: *Buck-Lateral Series off "Y"*

(Upper left) Fake lateral, buck over middle. (Upper right) Fake lateral, buck inside tackle. (Middle left) Fake buck, wide lateral. (Middle right) Fake buck, double handoff, off short side tackle. (Lower left) Fake lateral, quarterback outside tackle. (Lower right) Fake buck, double handoff, inside short side tackle.

Chart 25: *Single Wingback Passes*

(Upper left) Running pass. (Upper right) Fake cutback, pass over middle. (Middle left) Wing down. (Middle right) Wing over middle. (Lower left) Reverse pass. (Lower right) Pass following lateral.

## DOUBLE WINGBACK

*Formation.*—Three varieties of double wingback and an offshoot in which the double wing becomes a triple wing are shown in Chart 26.

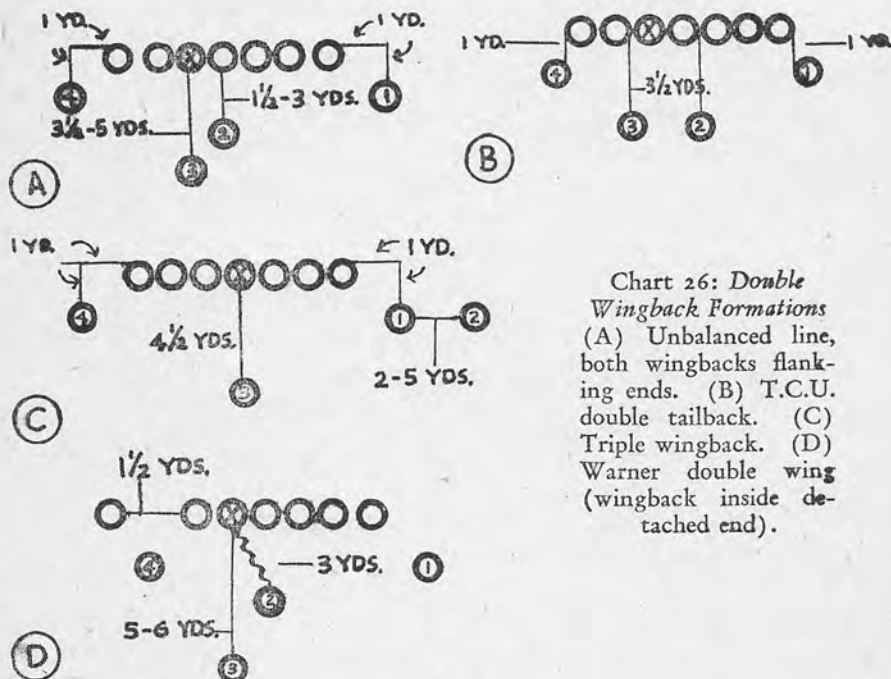


Chart 26: *Double Wingback Formations*  
 (A) Unbalanced line, both wingbacks flanking ends. (B) T.C.U. double tailback. (C) Triple wingback. (D) Warner double wing (wingback inside detached end).

Most obvious feature of the double wingback formation is the location of the two backs from which it receives its name. They are usually planted one yard or less outside the ends and a yard behind the line of scrimmage. Because of the width given the formation by these wingbacks, the seven linemen usually play close together, without splits between them. Depth of the No. 2 and No. 3 backs will affect their duties. For example, if No. 2 plays close to the line, he will be used primarily for block-



ing; if he plays three yards deep, he will be the spinnerman.

*Evaluation.*—1. It is an excellent passing formation. Four men (the ends and wingbacks) are in position to get out quickly. Working as receiving teams, they are able to put on a dazzling variety of pass patterns.

2. Even with the line unbalanced, the formation has balance because of the extra back on the short side. This setup gives it strength to *both* sides.

3. The possibilities for deceptive spinner plays and reverses are many and varied.

4. It is strong inside and outside of both tackles.

5. It is a good quick-kicking formation.

On the other side of the ledger we find:

1. The formation is weak to the outside. Crashing defensive ends can do much to disrupt the attack.

2. Running plays are very slow getting to the point of attack.

3. It leaves something to be desired in up-the-middle power.

4. As its plays require perfect timing and maneuvering, it is a difficult formation to master.

*Personnel.*—The double wingback formation's particular personnel needs include:

1. A runner-passer-quick-kicker at the tailback post (No. 3).

2. Fast wingbacks (1 and 4) who handle the ball well and can block and receive passes.

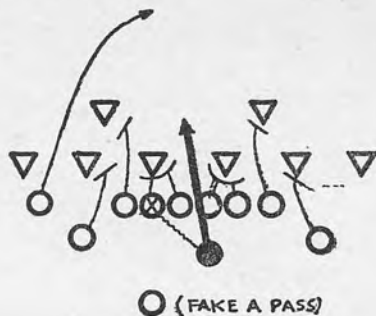
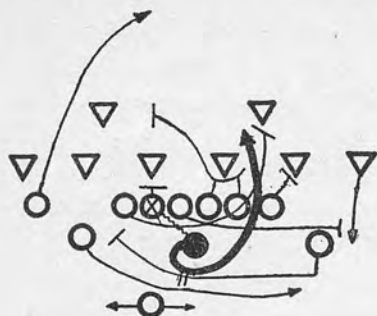
3. A good ball-handler and/or blocker at No. 2; also plunging talent at No. 2 and ball-handling ability at No. 3.

4. Good pass-receiving ends who can block.

5. Fast, good-blocking guards.

6. A strong and agile center. Both guards often "pull" in the double wing, leaving the center by himself.

*Plays.*—See Charts 27-29, following.



○ (FAKE A PASS)

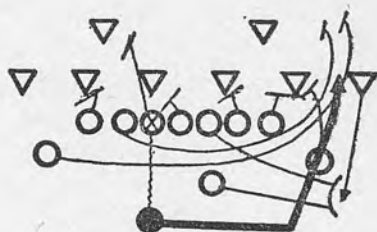
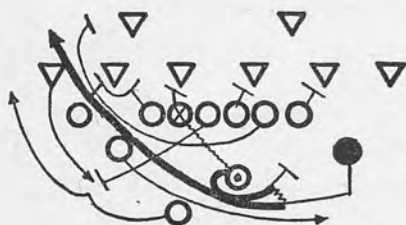
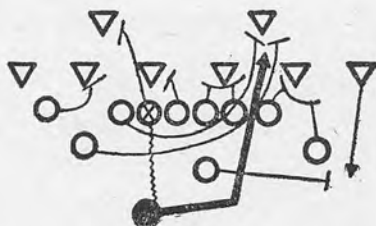
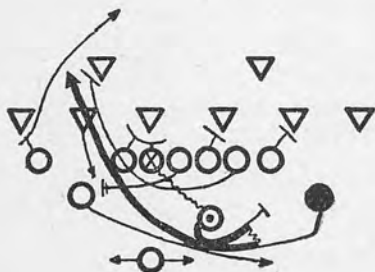


Chart 27: *Double Wingback Plays*

(Upper left) Spin inside tackle. (Upper right) Quarterback sneak.  
 (Middle left) Reverse inside tackle. (Middle right) Cutback inside tackle.  
 (Lower left) Reverse outside tackle. (Lower right) Cutback outside tackle.

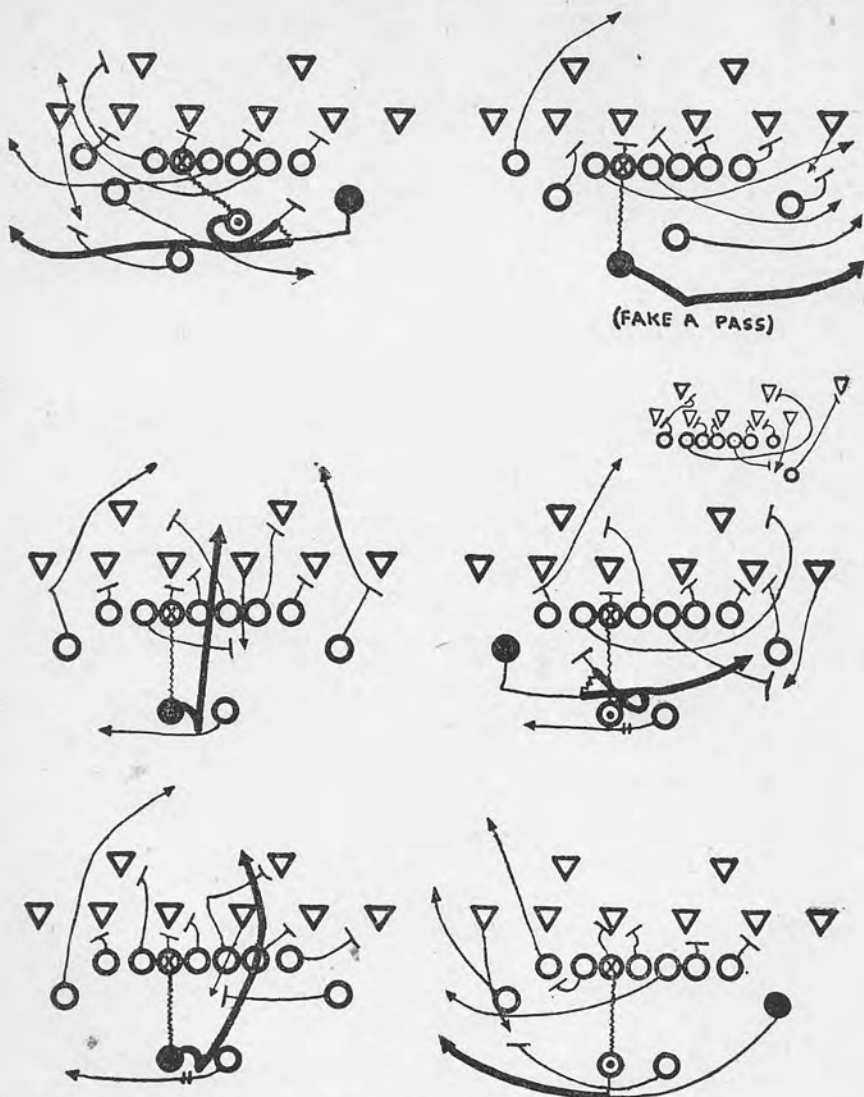


Chart 28: *Double Wingback Plays*

(Upper left) Reverse outside end. (Upper right) Sweep. (Middle left) Half-spin over middle. (Middle right) Reverse outside tackle. (Lower left) Outside trap. (Lower right) Statue of Liberty.

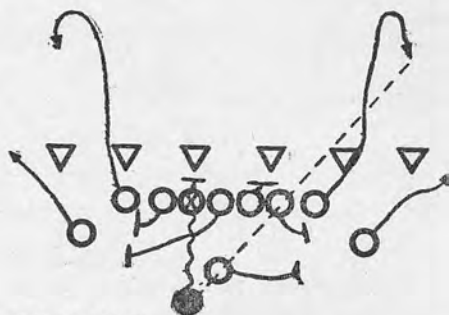
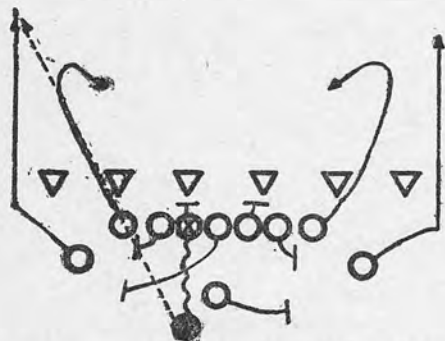
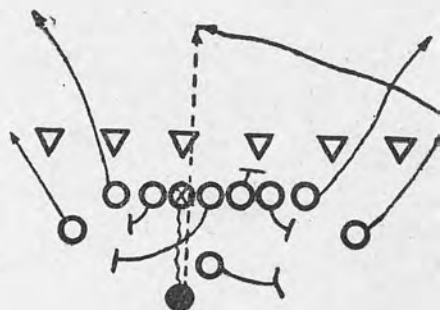
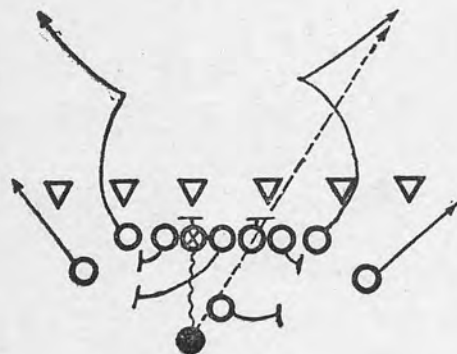
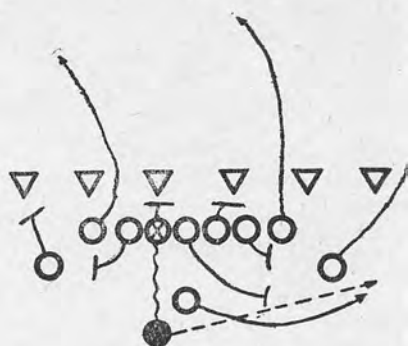
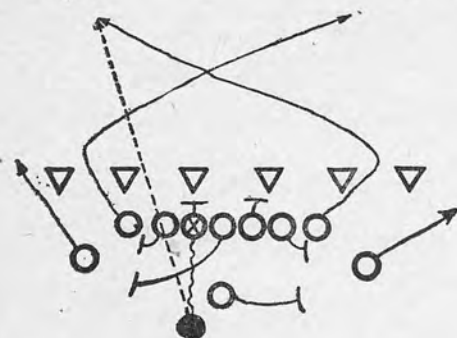
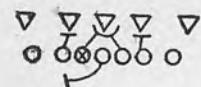


Chart 29: *Double Wingback Passes*

(Upper left) Ends crossing. (Upper right) Third man out. (Middle left) Ends down. (Middle right) Wing across. (Lower left) Backs down. (Lower right) Ends hooking.

## SHORT PUNT

*Formation.*—The short punt formation, as shown in Chart 30 is almost identical with that already shown for deep punt (Chart 9, page 71), except that the tailback is five yards behind the line of scrimmage instead of ten. As in the single wingback, three backs are in position to take the pass from center.

*Evaluation.*—Inherent strong qualities of the short punt formation include:

1. It has good balance.
2. Location of the backs sets the stage for deceptive ball-handling and a good lateral-passing attack.

3. It is an excellent passing formation, both from a standpoint of getting receivers out and protecting the passer.

4. It is an ideal formation from which to quick kick.

Arrayed against these good points are the following potential weaknesses:

1. A strong off-tackle play is hard to develop, because there are no flanking backs to help the ends work on the tackles.
2. It is not strong to the weak-side outside.
3. Although it is a well-balanced formation physically, it is not ideal for a well-balanced attack in that the passing potentialities are stronger than the running potentialities.

*Personnel.*—To exhaust its possibilities, the short punt formation needs:

1. A triple-threat tailback (No. 3).
2. Other backs who are good, fast receivers; No. 2 and No. 4 men who are expert ball-handlers; plunging ability from the No. 2 post, and strong blocking from No. 1.
3. Good pass-receiving ends.
4. Big, active tackles who are good line blockers.

*Plays.*—See Charts 31-33, following.

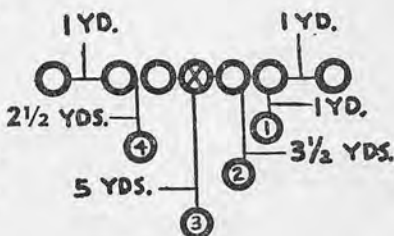
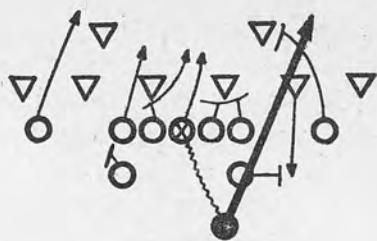
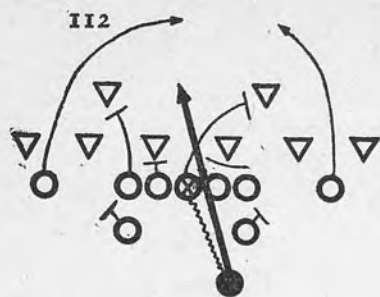


Chart 30: Short Punt Formation  
Balanced line.



○ (FAKE A PUNT)

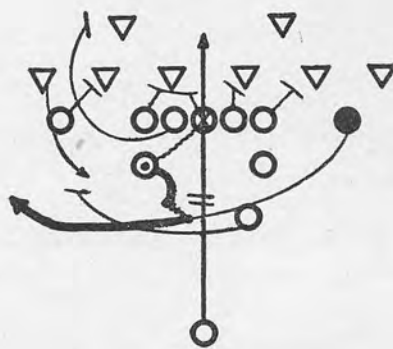
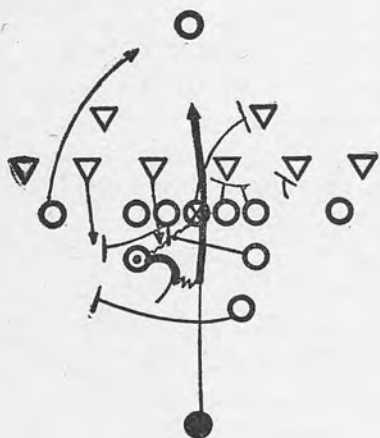
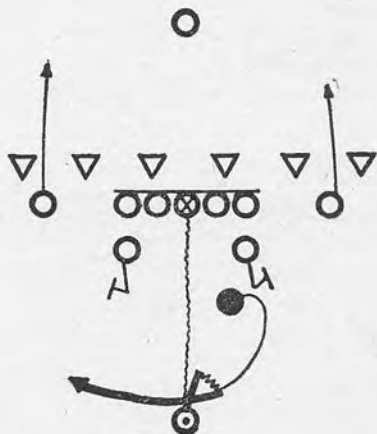
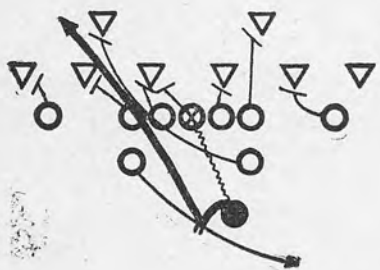


Chart 31: Plays from Deep Punt Formation

(Upper left) Fullback smash over middle. (Upper right) Quick smash inside tackle. (Middle left) Fake reverse. (Middle right) Fake punt and run, with handoff. (Lower left) Fake and handoff to tailback. (Lower right) Right end around.

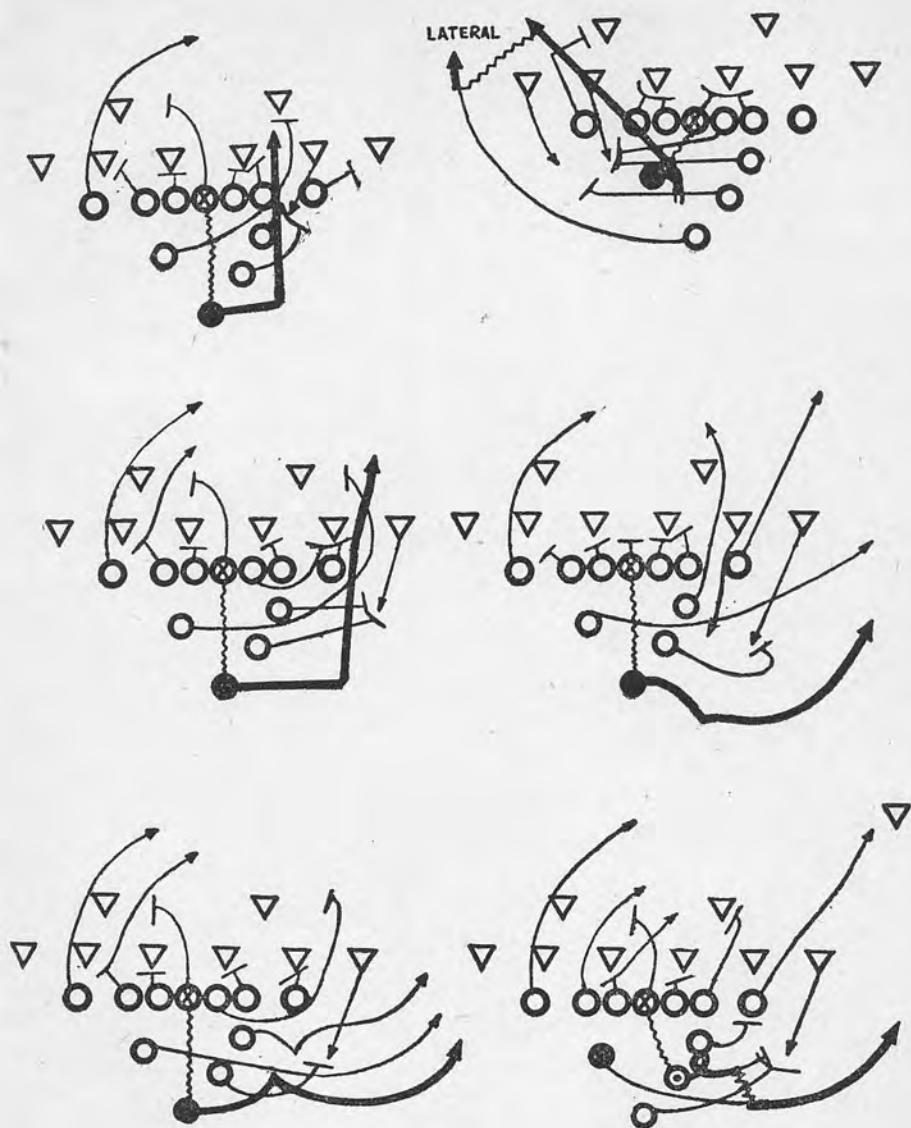


Chart 32: *Plays from Short Punt Formation*

(Upper left) Cutback inside tackle. (Upper right) Half spin, trap on tackle. (Middle left) Cutback outside tackle. (Middle right) Fake pass and run. (Lower left) In-and-out. (Lower right) Wide lateral.



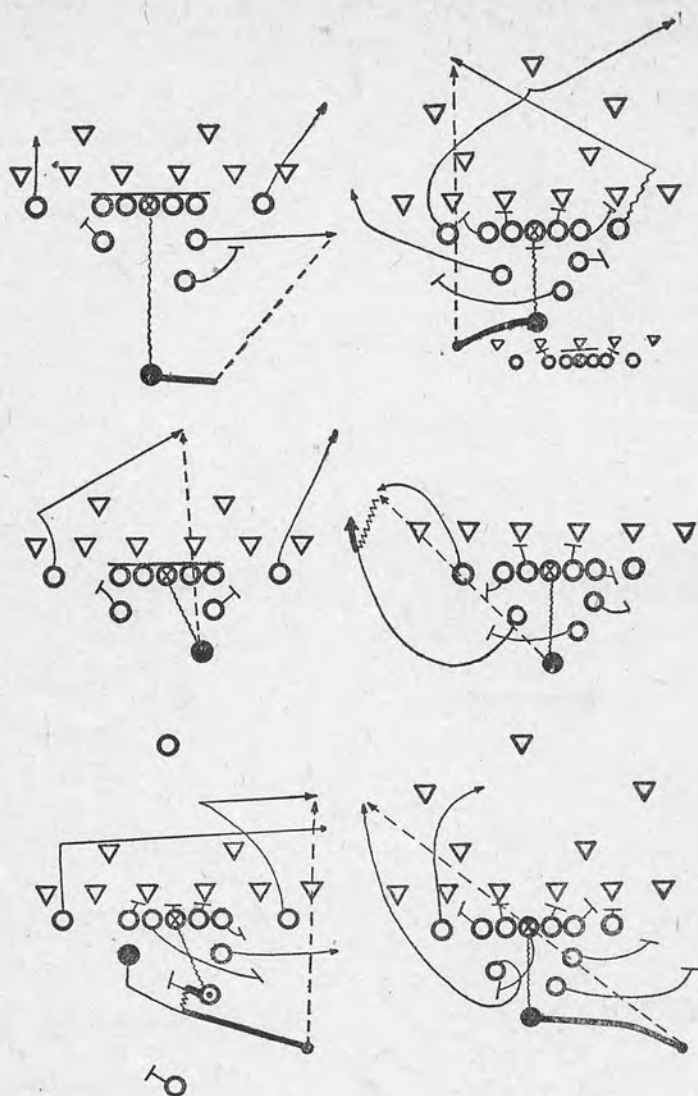


Chart 33: *Punt Formation Passes, Tailback Deep and Tailback Close*  
 (Upper left) Quick pass to right half. (Upper right) Ends crossing.  
 (Middle left) Full to left end over middle. (Middle right) Forward-backward.  
 (Lower left) Reverse pass. (Lower right) Sideline pass.

## T FORMATION

*Formation.*—Most significant feature of the T setup is the ball-handler behind the center. The quarterback takes the ball on a blind pass (see Chapter 3, "Center Play") on nearly every play, although a direct pass to one of the three deep backs is occasionally used. He may pivot and hand the ball off quickly to another back; fake to one back and hand it to another; drop back and hand off the ball; drop back, fake a handoff and throw a forward pass (or vice versa); fake a handoff and run with the ball himself; pass laterally to various backs; rise from his close position and throw a forward or lateral pass; take the ball up the middle on a quarterback sneak.

The T is the oldest formation and yet the newest. Its successful revival and vogue may be traced to the introduction of the man in motion and flanker. The original T was strong inside the tackles but lacked strength off tackle and had virtually

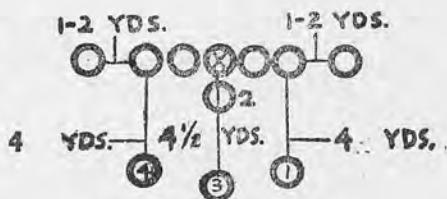


Chart 34: T Formation  
Balanced line.

no wide threat. The man in motion, however, modifies the T in such a way that, while keeping the inherent advantage of that setup, it gains the benefits of the single wingback and spread formations. By sticking a flanker out on one side and sending a man in motion to the other side, it can be made into a double wingback formation, and so on.

The T formation discussed here and shown in Chart 34, above, is the modern one. A variation from the standard or "Chicago Bear" T should be noted. The so-called "Seahawk" or "Missouri" T utilizes the split line (varying spaces between linemen) to secure width and blocking angles that loosen up the formation, with restricted use of the man in motion.

*Evaluation.*—Assets of the modern balanced-line T formation include:

1. It is perfectly balanced, both in line and backfield.
2. It is the fastest hitting formation in football.
3. Its basic maneuvers are simple except for the actions of two or three men on each play.
4. It is an excellent formation for passing, as the receivers can get out quickly, there is balanced protection and the quarterback's own maneuvers are calculated to forestall rushing.
5. The quarterback's ball-handling makes all plays look alike at inception, a fact which tends to "freeze" the defense in place until the play starts developing.
6. The fact that the T center makes his pass with his head up and in position to block makes him a "whole man" in the interference rather than "half a man."
7. Use of the man in motion lends variety to the attack.
8. The necessity for sustained blocking is not so pronounced as in other formations. The T play needs a sharp, hard, quick block but not a prolonged one.
9. The ball-carriers don't have to concentrate on the ball; it is fed to them by the quarterback.

And now for the rebuttal:

1. In the T formation, depending as it does on speed, finesse, deception and man-for-man blocking, it is difficult to get interference ahead of the ball on direct plays.
2. Its personnel requirements are more inflexible than any other formation's, in that it **MUST** have team speed and an outstanding quarterback.
3. It is an undesirable setup from which to quick-kick, although not an impossible one.
4. Although its basic maneuvers are relatively simple and can be learned by a green team more quickly than some of the others, perfect execution requires such delicate timing that only *experienced* teams can fully realize its potentialities.

*Personnel.*—To insure its successful operation, the T formation needs:

1. Most importantly, a quarterback who is a sure, quick ball-handler, good passer and brainy field general.

2. Fast, hard-running men at the other backfield positions, all with pass-catching ability. The fullback should be a good plunger and preferably a passer and quick-kicker.

3. Good pass-receiving ends.

4. Fast chargers at all line positions.

*Plays.*—See Charts 35-38, following.

## SIGNALS

### THE SYSTEM

With formation selected and plays charted, the team needs some standardized, simple and concise system of designating each play. In the old days, when quarterbacks barked signals from formation position, plays were designated by numbers. Now that nearly all teams get their signals in the huddle, that method is still popular but has been supplemented by other methods: adding words to the play number, to describe the play further, as "48 in-and-out"; adding letters to designate the type of blocking, as "37x handoff"; actually detailing the play, as "left half outside tackle, right," and so on.

A popular and satisfactory method is to use a double digit number and a descriptive word or words to identify the play. The first digit identifies the back to whom the center will pass the ball. The second digit tells where the play is to hit. The description differentiates the play from any other that might start the same way and hit the same point but in a different manner.

To use this system, the backs must be numbered and also the

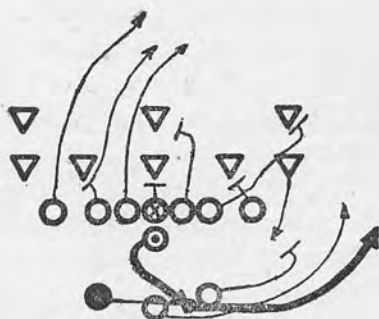
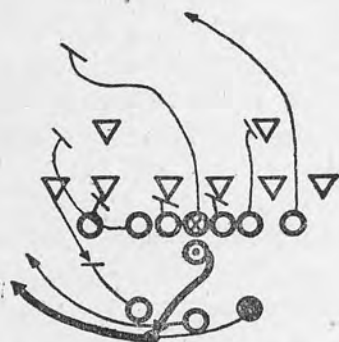
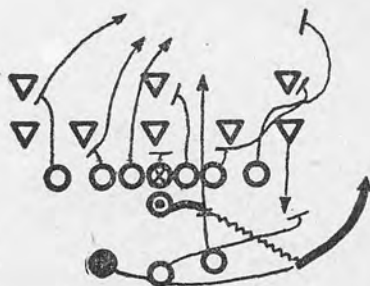
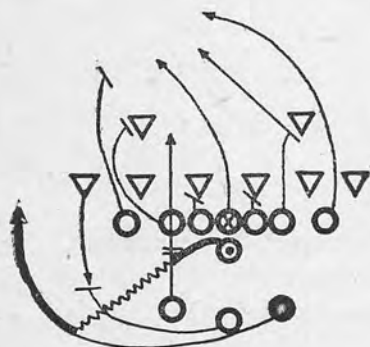
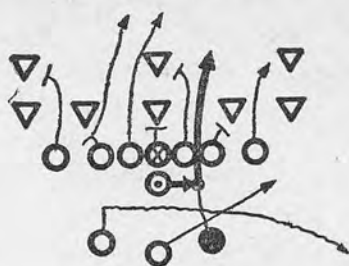
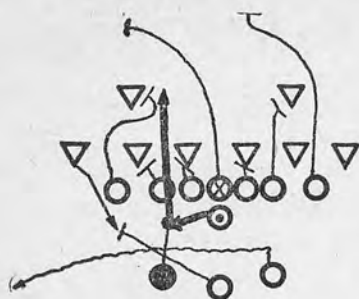


Chart 35: *T Formation Plays, Six-man Line and Five-man Line*  
 (Upper left) Left half quick. (Upper right) Right half quick.  
 (Middle left) Fake to left half, lateral to right half. (Middle right)  
 Fake to right half, lateral to left half. (Lower left) Right half end  
 run. (Lower right) Left half end run.

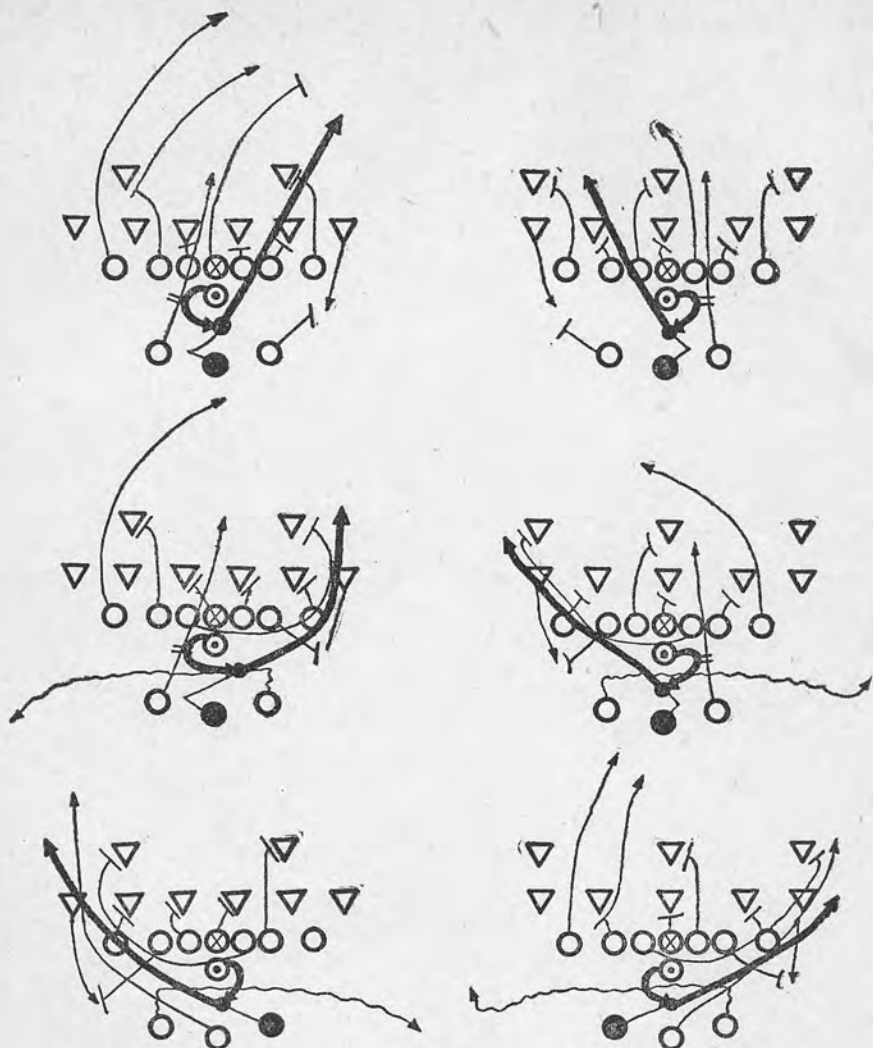


Chart 36: T Formation Plays, Six-man Line and Five-man Line

(Upper left) Fake to left half, fullback inside tackle. (Upper right)

Fake to right half, fullback inside tackle. (Middle left) Fake to left

half, fullback off tackle. (Middle right) Fake to right half, fullback

off tackle. (Lower left) Right half counter. (Lower right) Left half

counter.

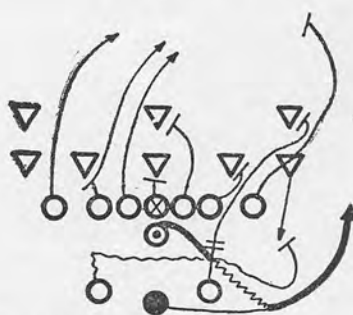
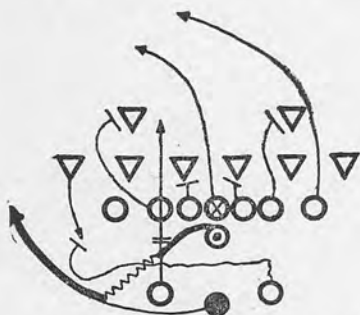
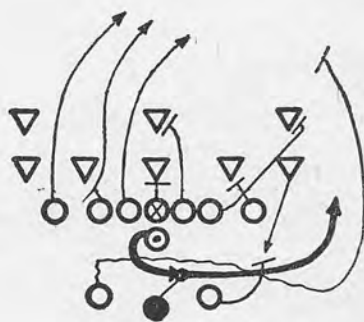
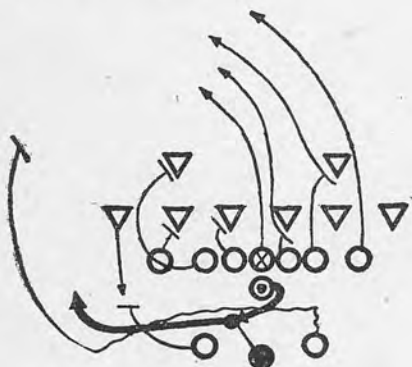
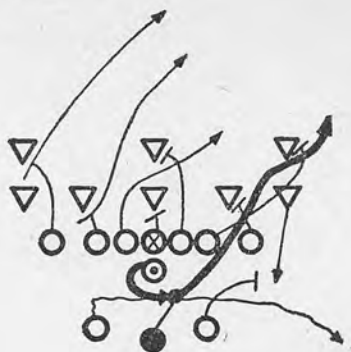
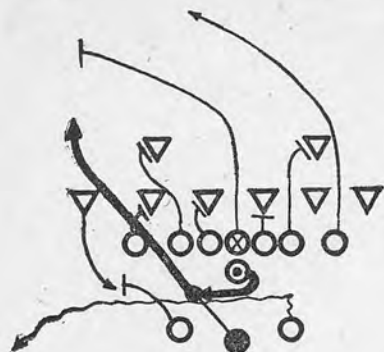
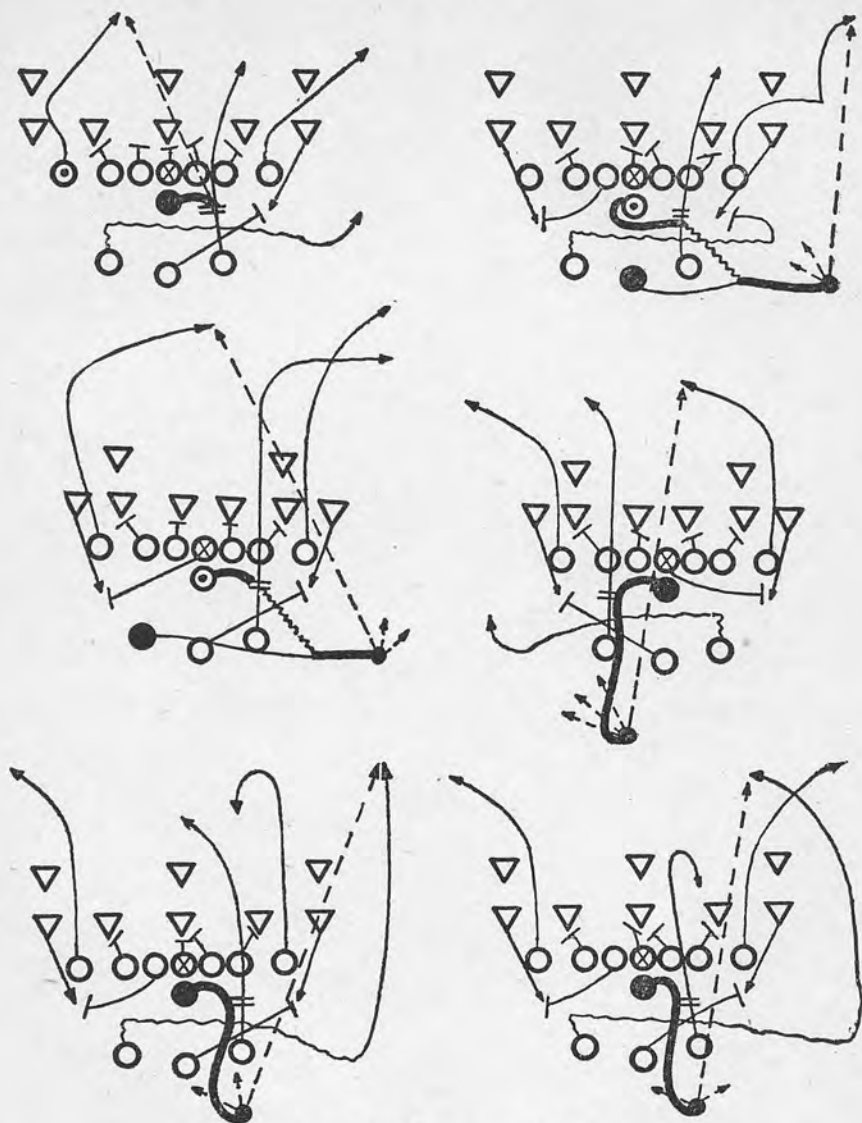


Chart 37: *T Formation Plays, Six-man Line and Five-man Line*  
 (Upper left) Fullback off-tackle slant, left. (Upper right) Fullback  
 off-tackle slant, right. (Middle left) Fullback end run, left. (Middle  
 right) Fullback end run, right. (Lower left) Fullback lateral, left.  
 (Lower right) Fullback lateral, right.

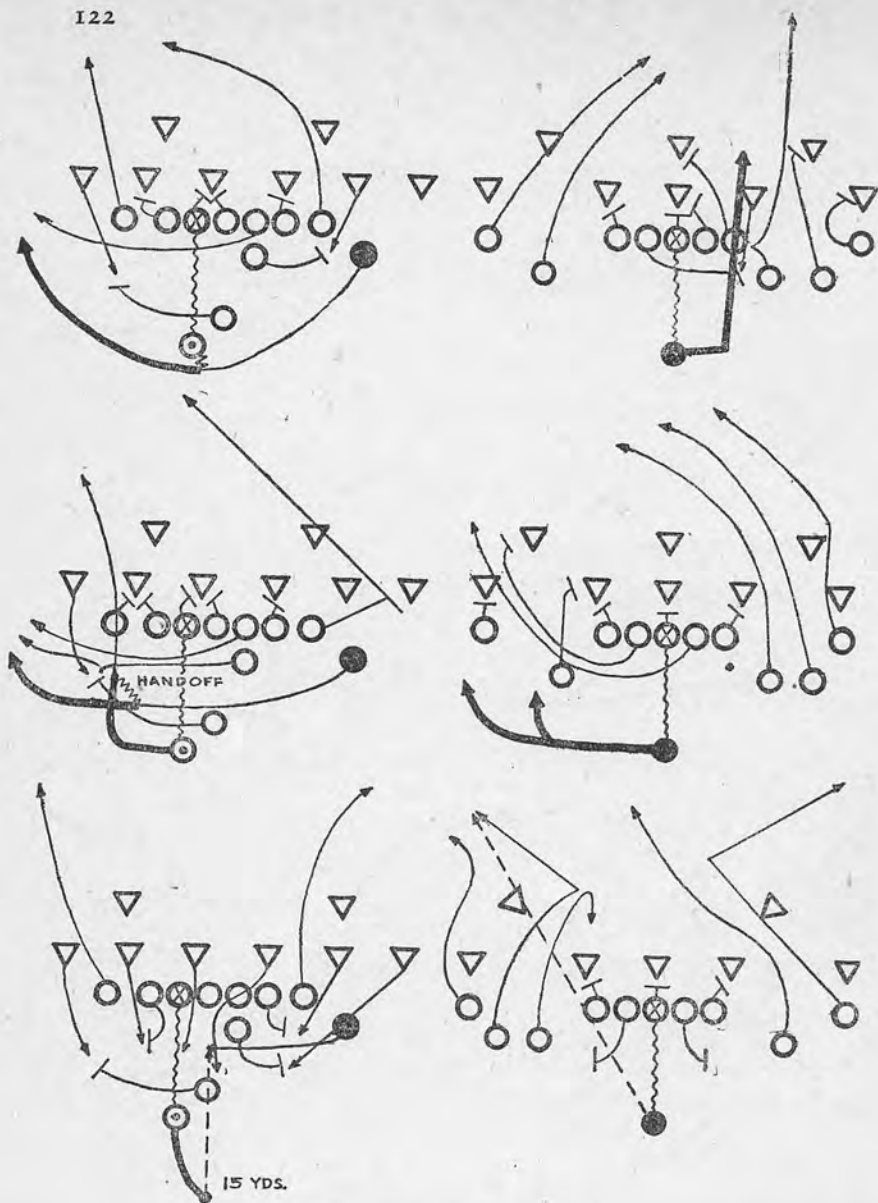


Chart 38: *T Formation Passes*

(Upper left) Quick pass to left end. (Upper right) Fullback pass.

(Middle left) Halfback pass. (Middle right) Quarterback pass.

(Lower left) Halfback down. (Lower right) Halfback across.

Chart 39: *Special Plays*

(Upper left) Statue of Liberty—run or pass. (Upper right) Spread—trap on tackle. (Middle left) Fake off tackle—handoff to wingback. (Middle right) Spread—off tackle or end run. (Lower left) Screen pass (three middle linemen delay until wing says, "Go!"). (Lower right) Spread—pass.

points of attack. A good way to number the backs is in accordance with the National Rules Committee's recommendation for the first digits of jersey numerals: right halfback one, quarterback two, fullback three, left halfback four.

The points of attack may be designated (1) according to the defensive holes or (2) according to the offensive holes. Both principles are shown in Chart 40. The numbers assigned to the various holes were arbitrarily selected; another numbering method would be just as acceptable.

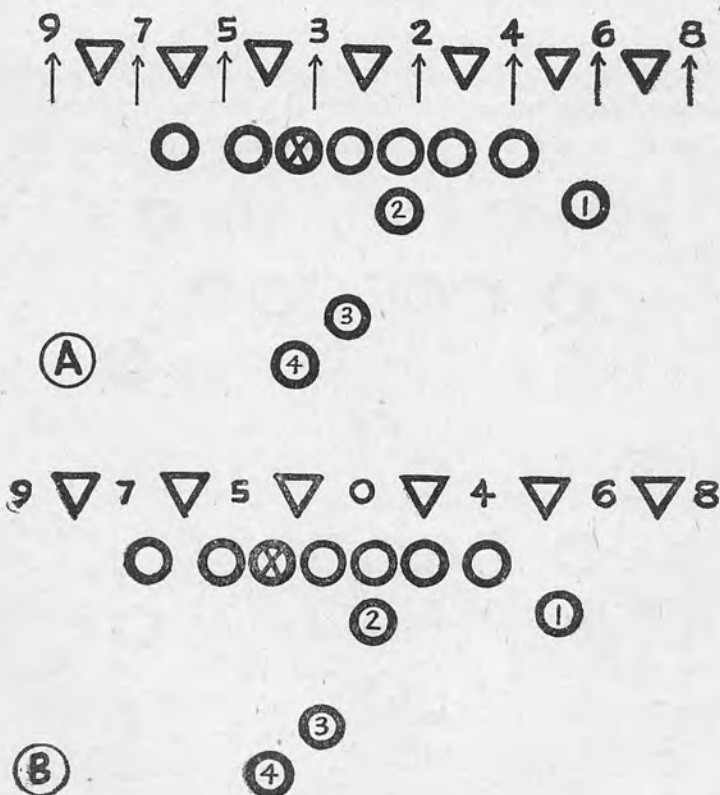


Chart 40: *Numbering the Holes*

(A) Seven-man line—eight defensive holes. (B) Six-man line—seven defensive holes. (See also C and D.)

An argument can be made out for either method. A team using the defensive-hole method must adjust its blocking to the defense. This adjustment usually is confined to two or three players near the point of attack. It does not mean that each man has to learn every play three times.

(Note: The defensive holes in an overshifted six-man line are identical with those of a five-man line except that the latter has no four-hole. If a four-play is called in the huddle and the team finds itself facing a five-man line, it automatically runs the equivalent six-play.)

Blocking assignments are specific when the defensive-hole system is used. Proponents of the offensive-hole method point out, however, that their plan enables the offense to pick the point of attack, rather than letting the defense determine it.

Linemen in the offensive-hole system, generally speaking,

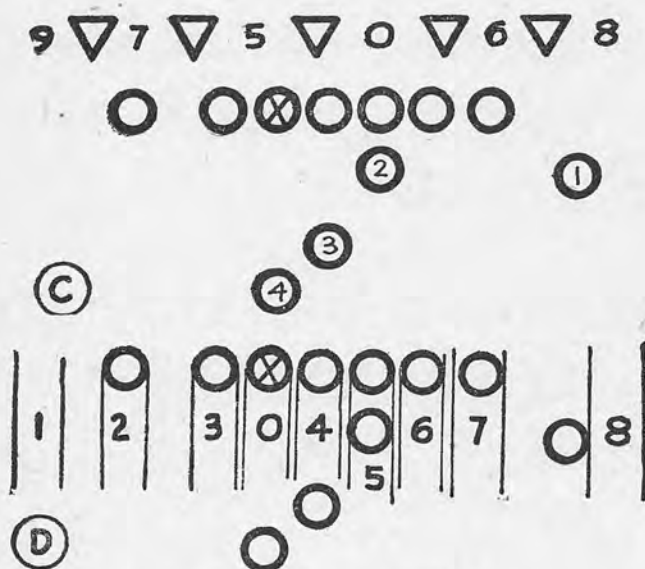


Chart 40: *Numbering the Holes*

(C) Five-man line—six defensive holes. (D) Offensive holes—same for all defenses. (See also A and B.)

block according to the location of the defensive linemen, driving them away from the point of attack. If no opponent is near, they go into the secondary and block away from the ball. Play-leading backs and pulling linemen generally block to the outside at the point of attack and away from the ball in the secondary.

A lineman (or less probably, the quarterback) may be designated to call a signal (a number, letter, word or series of numbers or letters) that will clarify blocking assignments after the team goes to formation position from the huddle. A combination of the two methods probably is the best arrangement; a standard plan with "check" signals for minor adjustments. The lineman's signal may include information as to the type of blocking to be used—whether direct or cross-blocking.

To go back to the "48 in-and-out" play mentioned earlier, that signal would mean that the No. 4 back was to take the ball from center, fake for the off-tackle (right) hole and then swing out and around right end—the "eight-hole." That would be the play-picture, regardless of which method was used to designate the hole.

#### THE HUDDLE

The huddle should be compact, neat-looking and orderly. The signal-caller is in complete charge. He is not to be interfered with or argued with in the huddle. If a teammate has information he wants to pass on to the signal-caller, he does it before the huddle is called to order.

The team huddles "on the ball" and five to eight yards back of it. The center selects the huddle site.

Arrangement of the players in the huddle should be the same each time. A good arrangement is as follows: The four backs form the base of a compact triangle, facing the line of scrimmage. The center is the apex of the triangle, and the other linemen take their places in relation to him as they would

on the line of scrimmage, except that they will be turned around to face to the inside. All heads should be on the same plane.

Chart 41-A shows the huddle arrangement and the path of each man as he takes his position in the single wingback formation, strong to the right. Chart 41-B shows how the team would go into a single wingback formation left from the same sort of huddle, with numbers designating the order in which they would leave the huddle.

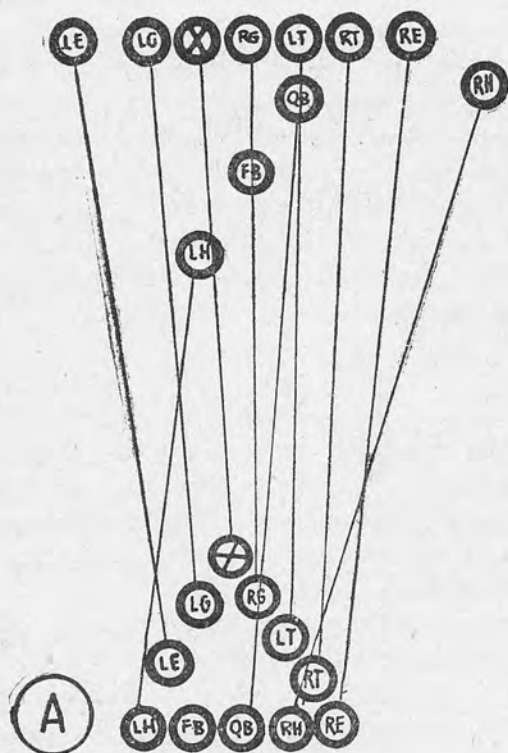


Chart 41: *The Huddle*

(A) Out of huddle into single wing right. (See also B.)

The signal-caller calls the play in a low but distinct voice. He adds the "snap signal"—the count upon which the center is to snap the ball. His words might be: "Thirty-six fake handoff, on three."

The signal-caller then gives some word of command, such as "Hike!" and the players wheel out of the huddle and head for their positions.

Players should come out of the huddle and up to the line briskly and confidently. A dressy huddle and snappy lineup create a good impression with the spectators and are good for team morale.

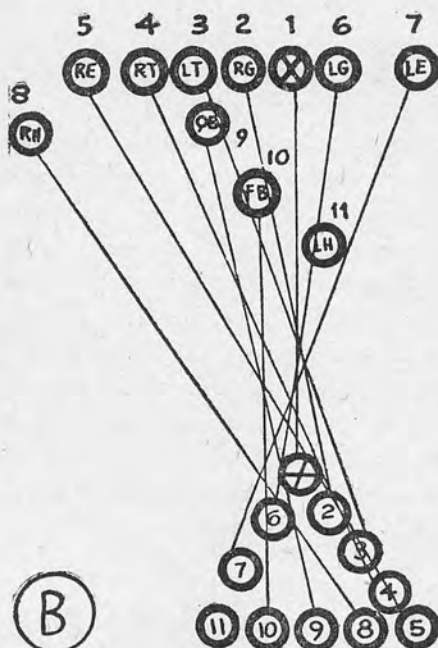


Chart 41: *The Huddle*

(B) Out of huddle into single wing left. Numbers indicate order in which men leave huddle. (See also A.)



## STARTING THE PLAY

A team may or may not go from the huddle into a preliminary formation. If it does, the preliminary setup should be a "live" one, that is, one from which plays may legally be run. Some teams, for example, take the T as a preliminary formation, shifting from it into their standard formation. The most popular combination is T and single wingback. They run enough plays off the preliminary formation, however, to keep the defense guessing. This plan has the advantage of holding opponents in place and out of the defense they intend to use (against the standard formation) until the last moment.

Used judiciously, a preliminary formation has merit. But if the team has no strong or deceptive plays off the preliminary formation, or never uses them, it would do better to assume the finish formation from the huddle:

A "dead" preliminary formation (one with fewer than seven men on the line of scrimmage) infrequently is seen from which the team shifts into its active setup. The only advantage is that the opponents do not know, until the shift, what the "finish" formation is going to be or how the players will be arranged.

The signal-caller will look over the field as his team goes into "finish" formation and call out the defense. For example, if the opponents are in a five-man line with three line-backers, he may call "five-three" or "fifty-three." He may also have at his disposal certain check signals, whereby he can change or vary the play to take advantage of some defensive arrangement. The signal-caller should be well versed in defensive patterns so that he can note quickly whether the opponents are playing an over-shifted, normal or undershifted line.

He will then give a set signal, such as "ready," at which all players will assume their offensive stances. The signal-caller then will start counting, and on the agreed number the center will pass the ball.

When the signal-caller thinks the opponents have been lulled

by the rhythm of the "ready—count" routine, he may call for the ball to be snapped on "ready." This stratagem, if not used too often, is likely to catch the opposition off guard. It is especially useful when the defense is shifting after the offensive team is set.

Many signal-callers fall into a habit of starting every play on the two or three count. The count should be varied, with some plays starting on the one count and some on the five or six. If the opponents are guessing and timing their charges to the two or three count, the signal-caller should use a longer count. Chances are that the guessers will jump offside.

## *Individual Defensive Play*

A FAMILIAR football cliché is: A good offense is the best defense. There is some truth in it of course, but all of us have seen a team with a good offense take a bad licking—because its opponent had a good offense AND a sturdy defense that enabled it to gain control of the ball. A great offense can keep the ball, but first it has to *get* the ball.

Elements in a sound defense include:

1. Good tackling.
2. Aggressive, smart individual play.
3. Speed, especially on pass defense.
4. A well-coordinated *defensive plan*.
5. And, as always, personnel that is comparable physically with that of the opposition. In theoretical football discussions it is assumed that the contesting individuals or teams are of about equal strength. It is entirely possible for a well-coached, smart and spirited team to be simply outmanned.

### TACKLING

#### HOW TO TACKLE

As the block is the keystone of the attack, so is the tackle the prime element in defense. There is a close kinship, in fact, be-

tween a shoulder block and a tackle. It has been said that a tackle is a shoulder block in which the player is permitted to use his hands and arms.

Good blockers are good tacklers, and vice versa.

In the course of a game the same player may be called on to make tackles on or near the line of scrimmage and in the secondary. Sometimes he will have to meet the ball-carrier head on; sometimes he will take him from the side; sometimes from behind. Most in-line and close secondary tackles are of the head-on variety, because the runner is not in position to maneuver.

Speed is of the essence in getting tackling position; yet the tackler must retain body control.

There are certain general tackling rules that apply under almost all circumstances:

1. The tackler must throw himself into his work. Tackling is 25 per cent technique, 75 per cent DESIRE.

2. He must get *position* on the runner, which includes getting close to him before launching the tackle and "meeting him at the crossroads."

3. As he goes in for a tackle, his feet should be well apart, his legs coiled, back straight, neck bowed, head up and eyes on the target (usually the ball-carrier's midsection).

4. He must hit the runner with shoulder and body, not with the arms. The arms should play no part in the tackle until immediately after contact, except as a desperate last resort. Aiming the *head* rather than the shoulder will decrease the tackler's margin of error.

5. He should *immediately* follow up shoulder contact by encircling with his arms the runner's legs.

6. The trajectory of the tackle is *low* and *up*—never high and down. (Tip: Hit with *front* of shoulder.)

7. The tackler should keep his feet as long as possible and try to throw the ball-carrier backward, or at least stop him in his tracks.

## HEAD-ON TACKLE

The typical head-on tackle is made by a lineman on or across the line of scrimmage, or by a line-backer as the runner bursts through a hole in the line. Following the general tackling rules, as to position of body, feet and head, the tackler drives his near shoulder into the runner's midsection and at that instant wraps his arms around the runner's legs. Pulling the legs in against his chest, the tackler *lifts* the runner and drives him straight back.

Tactics the tackler may have to employ to reach the ball-carrier will be discussed later in this chapter.

A head-on tackle will occur in the secondary when the ball-carrier, from choice or necessity, does not employ the customary evasive tactics. As the runner approaches, the tackler takes a well spread, coiled and forward-balanced position and moves against him with short "stuttering" steps, being prepared to move quickly in another direction if the ball-carrier suddenly changes his course.

## SIDE TACKLE

Most open-field tackles will be made from the side, on a ball-carrier who is running at right angles to or diagonally away from the tackler or who has just attempted one of the evasive stunts described in Chapter IV. The approach is similar to that for the head-on tackle, except that the tackler will attempt to shoot his head and body in front of the runner. If unable to obtain that advantageous position, he will hook his arms powerfully around the runner's legs and try to twist his body into the runner's path.

Even in the former case, the tackle must be certain to hook one arm *behind* the runner, who otherwise will spin out of the tackle.

## TACKLE FROM BEHIND

Contact should be made waist high with arms immediately sliding down and powerfully encircling the runner's legs. The tackler should be close enough to use his shoulder as well as his arms in the rear tackle, else he probably will get only a flying heel in his face.

## OPEN FIELD TIPS

Halfbacks approaching a ball-carrier in the open field must be alert for a change of pace, change of direction and other stunts. They must not leave their feet too soon. They will try to herd the runner toward the sideline, so he will have to run out of bounds or cut back into their range. Shifty backs, adept at the sidestep, limp-leg and other stunts involving fancy footwork, should be tackled *high*. Hard-driving, straight-line runners should be tackled *low*. Sometimes a cross-body block, instead of a tackle, can be used advantageously on the sideline when the defensive man "has the angle."

## TACKLING THE PASSER

The passer should be tackled high and his throwing arm pinned. A cool passer can complete passes with a tackler hanging on to his waist or legs.

## TACKLING PRACTICE

Players should have plenty of practice on the tackling dummy for form. Scrimmage is the best place for "live" tackling practice.

## DEFENSIVE STANCE

## LINE

Considerable variation of defensive stance, to fit the individual, is permissible. Conditioned somewhat by the defensive plan on any particular play, the defensive lineman must take a stance from which he can:

1. Get a low, hard, quick, aggressive charge.
2. Move obliquely, laterally or backward, as well as straight forward.
3. See his immediate opponent or opponents, the ball and the backs in position to receive the ball, all at the same time (split vision). The defensive player's charge is based on the movement of the ball—not on the actions of the offensive players or the quarterback's count.

Generally speaking, the defensive stance is quite similar to the offensive stance. The four-point is a better defensive than offensive stance, but both knees must be off the ground.

A general rule is that guards play lower than tackles and tackles lower than ends on defense. In most instances the guards will be low in a four or three-point position; the tackles will be in a three-point or crouched stance, and the ends will be working out of a crouched or semi-erect stance. The defensive stance may be varied from play to play.

## SECONDARY

Line-backers will assume a two-point stance from one to five yards behind the line, their positions *laterally* being determined by the defensive setup. Charts in Chapter 9 show the standard lateral positions of line-backers in seven-, six-, and five-man line arrangements. The line-backers must be balanced and relaxed, bodies bent slightly forward and somewhat open to the



inside, hands on knees or carried in front of body, feet in position for a quick start in any direction.

Halfbacks and safety should take erect, comfortable positions, ready to move in any direction. The halfbacks usually play from seven to ten yards deep; the safety may be in line with them, up to 15 yards deep or, when a punt is indicated, 35 to 40 yards deep. The safety must be prepared to go back fast when a quick kick is spotted. It is not well, however, for him ever to turn his back on the play.

### DEFENSIVE RESPONSIBILITY

Depending on the type of defense being used, each of the eleven defensive players has a more or less specific assignment on every play. It will almost always have to do with a specified territory; it may have to do with coverage of a specified opponent on pass plays; often it is a combination assignment.

These are some of the factors that will influence an individual defender's actions:

1. The defensive arrangement and plan.
2. The offensive formation.
3. The tactical situation—what down, yardage to go, position on the field, time and score.
4. Condition of the field.
5. Special defensive plays (as for blocking a punt).
6. Known abilities of the offensive team.
7. Known abilities of the defender's supporting teammates.
8. In some instances, the actions of a designated opponent (as when an offensive back goes in motion).

With all these variable factors affecting individual actions, it is practicable to speak only in broad generalities of the "duties" of a guard, end, line-backer and so on. In the broadest aspect, a lineman's first responsibility is to protect his territory. Secondly he is asked to diagnose the play and make the tackle if possible. Backs support the line on running plays and cover

designated areas or receivers on passes. Both linemen and backs must be alert for the opponents' efforts to maneuver them out of position.

#### GUARDS

Guards will protect the midline, watching for bucks, cross-bucks, fake handoffs and spinners hitting back over the middle, and fake passes or punts which turn into plunges. On passes they will rush the passer or drop back (after a short initial charge) to protect a designated zone. On punts they will rush the kicker or jam up the midline to hamper fast coverage of the punt. They must not let themselves be moved, either laterally or backward.

#### TACKLES

Protection of an area approximately as wide as their arm spread is the primary responsibility of the tackles. Their normal charge is to a point about a yard deep, at which point they are expected to stack up interference and possibly make the tackle. They usually will rush the passer and punter.

Tackles are key men in the defense, for some of the most powerful plays in football are aimed at their territory. By pre-arrangement they may work wide and cover up while the end smashes into the heart of the play. There is such a thing as tackles hitting and sliding out to stop wide plays. The latter practice is dangerous against a smart signal-caller, who will take advantage of it if it is habitually used. The weak-side tackle sometimes figures in the pass defense, especially against the flat-zone variety.

#### ENDS

The ends may be responsible for outside territory, or they may be assigned to crash in tight while the line-backer, halfback

or tackle takes the wide responsibility. Usually their primary duty is to strip the ball-carrier of his convoy. Occasionally they are used in pass defense, either (1) taking position off the line of scrimmage as a wide line-backer, (2) dropping back into a zone as the pass develops or (3) taking a specified receiver man-for-man. Often they are assigned to rush the passer, and they are nearly always asked to rush the kicker. The various types of end play are discussed later in this chapter.

#### CENTER

In modern football the center is usually a line-backer. If he goes into the line, he is "physically in, mentally out"—in position to stop line thrusts like a guard, but alert for pass indications and prepared to drop back quickly into his assigned zone.

#### LINE-BACKERS

Good line-backers can make an average line look great; poor line-backers will nullify the effectiveness of a good line. Nowadays, under normal conditions, the defense usually will call for two line-backers, often three and sometimes four. Line-backers should be alert, fast, tough, excellent tacklers and able to diagnose plays quickly. One of them (usually the center) will be the defensive signal-caller. He must be well-grounded in football theory, in order to know what defense should be most effective considering the tactical situation and the potentialities of both teams. All line-backers should know thoroughly the offensive formations they are facing, to know what to expect and where to look for it.

A line-backer is responsible for (1) plugging the holes in the defensive line on running plays, (2) protecting a specified zone on passes, (3) sometimes, covering a specified opponent man-for-man on passes, (4) helping protect the flank on wide plays to his side and supporting another line-backer on plays to the

other side, meanwhile watching for cutbacks into his territory. On occasion he may crash or slice through the line to break up delayed plays or to rush the passer or kicker. Often he will have to "make it safe" while a defensive lineman rushes the passer or kicker or attempts some unorthodox maneuver.

### HALFBACKS

The defensive halfbacks form the third line of defense. They must always be alert for passes into their territory, if they are playing zones, or in position to pick up their opponents if playing man-for-man. At the same time, they must support with alacrity on wide running plays. Especially is the halfback playing on the short or weak side of an unbalanced formation responsible on wide runs to his side. When the play goes the other way, the halfback is responsible for a cutback into his territory. If the safety man goes over to help on the opposite side, the "off" halfback becomes responsible for the safety position.

Defensive halfbacks must come up fast but under control on running plays. They must come up to the outside and force the runner to the inside. But if the ball-carrier has "turned the corner" and is already in the open field, then the halfback tries to maneuver him to the sideline. Thus a clear distinction must be made between the halfback's tactics when meeting runs on or near the line of scrimmage (favors outside) and when dealing with a runner who has broken past or around the first two lines of defense (crowds him to sideline).

### SAFETY

As the last line of defense, the safety's primary responsibility is to prevent touchdowns. He may be called on to drop a ball-carrier in the open field, or to bat down or intercept a deep pass, but in either case he must not let the opponent get behind him. If a halfback moves up to support on a running play, the safety

moves into position to protect the halfback's deeper territory.

The safety's responsibilities and actions on kicking downs were outlined in Chapter 6 under "Returning the Punt."

## REACHING THE BALL-CARRIER

As already noted, tackling is the heart of the defense. With instruction and practice, nearly every football player can become a good tackler. But the defensive problem does not begin with its most important element, the tackle.

Before the ball-carrier can be brought down, one or more defenders usually must get past one or more blockers. Even before that, the defense has arranged itself in such a way as to cover the field as adequately as possible. The various standard defensive arrangements will be discussed in Chapter 9.

The problem of evading interferers is more of an individual problem, and one that the defense encounters on every play.

### GUARDS AND TACKLES

The four men in the middle of a typical defensive line—the two guards and two tackles—have a common problem in that each of them will almost always be closely opposed by one or two blockers. Guards and tackles have neither time nor room to evade blockers by maneuvering alone, as a halfback might sift through interference in the open field.

Thus the defensive linemen can hardly hope to reach the ball-carrier, or make it easier for their teammates to reach him, by evasive tactics. They must play it "smart," diagnose and maneuver and employ all the tricks at their disposal, but in the final analysis defensive line play is a matter of shoulder-to-shoulder contact—strength against strength and courage against courage.

It has been said that the team which controls a yard-wide

strip of territory between the defensive tackles will usually win the ball game. It takes rugged, stout-hearted and strong-muscled boys and men down in the line. There is no way they can make it easy on themselves and still do a good job.

At the same time, linemen must use their heads as well as their muscles. We have already stressed that the player who charges wildly and recklessly is an easy touch for a smart offense. If the initial charge of the defensive lineman does not meet any opposition in the first yard, it is time for him to stop, look and listen. Unless the play is obviously to be a pass or punt, he must come to a low, balanced position, on four points or with feet spread and staggered, body braced, and get ready for a trap block. As the block is foreseen or applied, he must react against it and fight into the path of the ball.

The first thought in blocking is to get contact and keep it. The first thought in defensive line play is to get contact and lose it.

Some of the types of defensive charges guards and tackles will find useful are:

1. The *straight shoulder charge*, with shoulder contacting opponent below his shoulder as the leg on the contact side is brought up simultaneously. With feet wide and well under the body, the defensive man drives forward with short, choppy steps and uses his elbow and hands to shove the blocker aside. (Note: The blocker must not be struck with the heel of the hand or held, but the hands may be used to ward off his charge, push him into the ground or shove him aside. The arm may legally be used to lift him as a preliminary to pushing or shouldering him out of the way.)

The shoulder charge should start low. It may be prefaced by a dip of the defender's shoulder, much as a blocker attempts to dip under the defender's hands before launching a shoulder block.

The *dip charge* also is effective when two blockers are trying to double-team the defensive player. The latter dips under



their shoulders and bursts between them, splitting them with the force of his charge and the outward thrust of his elbows. This type of charge is to be differentiated from the *submarine*, in that the defender's knees and hands do not go to the ground.

2. The *submarine charge* is especially valuable for a guard trying to get under low-charging opponents. The defender drops quickly on hands and knees and drives forward.

3. The *forearm shiver*, or *stiff arm*, in which the open hands are thrust against the opponent's shoulders, arms stiff, the defender following up with leg and body drive and shoving the blocker backward, aside or into the ground—or simply playing him off and moving laterally toward the point of attack.

4. *One-against-two* is a basic maneuver; unless the guard or tackle is playing against the T formation or another system that stresses man-for-man blocking, he will have to anticipate opposition from two blockers. A good example is the defensive tackle facing an offensive end and wingback. (A review of end-wingback blocking, as detailed in Chapter 3, will indicate what type of resistance the defensive tackle may expect when he tries to get into the play.)

The defender facing two opponents usually will try to play first one, then the other. His actions must be quick and sharp, his charge vicious and his recovery immediate to reach his objective—usually a point one yard behind the line of scrimmage, blockers disposed of, waiting for the ball-carrier and protecting his territory.

The defensive man drives his shoulder and hip against one of his two opponents and at the same time drives his hands against the other. One opponent is shoved away; the other is bumped away, and the defender storms through the breach.

This defensive tactic requires catlike quickness, strength and aggressiveness. It is a fast "one-two punch" in which first one opponent and then the other is attacked in a manner to create a lateral hole between them.

5. *In-and-out* and *out-and-in* may be used as variants to the



above maneuver. In these stunts the defensive lineman concentrates his drive against one of his two opponents and then reacts to the inside or outside. For instance, a tackle facing an end and wingback on a short-yardage down might logically expect a play to his inside. He might employ the out-and-in charge, driving hard off the wingback and then immediately reacting and fighting to his inside. Thus he would be facing and fighting toward the expected point of attack. If because of the yardage-and-down situation he has reason to expect a wide play, he might drive off the end in the same manner (end playing inside the wingback) and immediately react and fight to gain outside position. The end and line-backer will cooperate with the tackle on this type of maneuver.

The dip charge and the submarine charge already have been mentioned as one-against-two possibilities.

6. A tackle playing off an offensive end's outside shoulder may employ the *limp-leg*. He takes a position with his inside foot extended; then as the end drives for it he brings it to the rear and swings it up, allowing the blocker to slide off the limp leg. The tackle pivots on the back foot, uses his hands to shove the blocker to the inside and goes in to protect his territory.

7. Guards may employ a stunt called *over-the-top*. The defender places his hands on the backs of low-charging opponents and leap-frogs over them. A player using this tactic must immediately square himself away and be prepared to meet the ball-carrier or to continue his forward charge.

8. A lineman opposed by two blockers sometimes will be out-charged and find himself pinned between them. In that case he should *spin out* powerfully and into the ball-carrier's path. He must give a little ground in this maneuver, but often he can stop the play after a short gain although in the preliminary stage he was completely blocked. Because of the time element, he may have to move obliquely back from the line of scrimmage, after spinning out of a block, in order to get position.

Linemen must vary their charges and tactics. At the same

time; they must remember that there is no easy way to play a line position. The defensive lineman is always meeting, fighting against and attempting to eliminate pressure. Unless he meets resistance, he isn't going in the right direction. Guards and tackles must be tough and aggressive, and they must have either the weight or the agility to avoid being manhandled by big blockers. The tackles, generally speaking, should be the biggest men on the team.

## ENDS

The end, being sort of a combination lineman and back, needs some of the physical attributes of both. He must have a back's speed and shiftiness, a lineman's ruggedness and aggressiveness. He must be in especially good condition, for he does more running (going down for passes and covering punts) than any other player.

Three distinct types of defensive ends are seen in modern football, and each can be very effective in his own way: (1) the *crashing* end, (2) the *drifting* end and (3) the *waiting* end.

The great defensive ends are those who can play any type of game, varying their tactics as the situation warrants. Here again we must stress that their actions, like those of other defensive players, will be regulated to some extent by the defensive setup and plan on any particular play.

The crashing end drives into the offensive backfield at a 45-degree angle, trying to strip or stack up the interference. Sometimes the speed and viciousness of his charge will nip the play before it can form. Sometimes he will bowl over the blockers and get the tackle himself, although more often that honor is left to a teammate. When the end crashes, adjustments must be made in the defense to handle a ball-carrier swinging to his outside. If the crashing end has done a good job, the ball-carrier should be easy pickings for the outside line-backer or defensive halfback.

The waiting end plays a more conservative game, holding his territory and going to the play as it develops. The drifting end must be an expert handfighter, playing off the blockers, giving ground to the outside (although not backward) if necessary and trying to sift through the interference and make the tackle.

An end who has mastered all three types of defensive play can vary his tactics in a most effective manner. On one play he may crash as described. On the next he may start in fast, then suddenly fade and drift with the interference, employing hand-fighting tactics to slow down the play and perhaps get to the ball-carrier.

He may penetrate two or three steps at a deeper angle than before, then turn and crash from that position. Or he may make the deep penetration and wait for the play. And to complete the cycle, he may crash, retreat and then crash again, a maneuver that makes it hard for the blockers to "get a bead on him."

Quick play diagnosis, variation of tactics and the strength and agility to keep blockers off his legs are earmarks of a good defensive end.

## BACKS

The primary duties of a defensive back already have been outlined. These further points should be mentioned:

*Line-backers* filling up holes go in hard, low and squared away, driving the ball-carrier back if he is coming through alone or stacking up the interference to close the gap. They use their shoulders on play-leaders, leaving arms free to make the tackle. They should be expert, split-second play diagnosticians. Running plays and short passes are successful only when the line-backers are blocked or caught out of position.

Defensive *halfbacks* coming up to meet a ball-carrier led by one or more interferers should use feints to get to the runner. By faking to go to the outside of the interferers, the halfback

may lead the runner to break to the inside. The halfback quickly swings in to meet him.

Halfbacks and line-backers get forward pass cues by watching the end on their side. If the end blocks in the line, it is almost surely a running play. If he breaks out or down the field, they must play it for a pass until it can be diagnosed otherwise.

In defending against passes, a back must keep *between the potential receiver and his goal*. Unless it is fourth down or the pass is a deep one near his goal line with an opponent in easy tackling distance, he should intercept passes whenever possible. End zone passes should be intercepted if possible and the man making the interception should immediately go to the ground to guard against a fumble. However, a pass defender should never be so eager to intercept that he will take chances on the intended receiver's wrestling the ball away from him or grabbing it out of his hands.

Passes should be batted *down* forcefully, not merely slapped. When intended receiver and defender are at close quarters, the latter should bat the ball down with his "off" hand and keep the near arm back of the opponent, in position to make the tackle if the receiver unexpectedly succeeds in catching the pass.

When the defender is sure no receiver is behind him, he should be cautious about going for over-shot passes. Unless he is in position to make a sure interception, he may succeed only in batting the ball into the receiver's hands.

## *Defensive Team Play*

DEFENSIVE team play is the simultaneous application by eleven men of the individual techniques described in the preceding chapter—all within the framework of a prearranged *defensive plan*. This plan has two phases: (1) deployment of the defensive men as the play starts, and (2) their cooperative actions after the ball is snapped.

Unlike the offense, the defense is not restricted by rule in its deployment. The only requirement is that the defensive players must be on side. While the attacking team must have at least seven men on the line of scrimmage, the defensive team may have seven, four, ten or none. This latitude encourages variations in the defensive pattern, and innumerable arrangements have been tried down through the years.

Out of these experiments certain defensive principles and standard defensive formations have emerged. Defensive players cannot safely be deployed helter-skelter. Some of them must be in position to rush the passer and kicker and to stop running plays on or behind the line of scrimmage. Some must be in position to defend against the pass or kick. There must be *defense in width*, to cover the field laterally, and there must be *defense in depth*, so that if one line of defenders fails to stop the play, another will be in position to do so.

The general requisites of a sound defensive arrangement may be summarized as follows:

1. A front line of defense on the line of scrimmage, consisting of four to eight men.
2. A second line within five yards of the first, composed of two to four men.
3. A third line eight to twelve yards back of the first, usually composed of at least two men.
4. And, preferably although not necessarily, a fourth line consisting of one player, the safety.

The primary assignments of these defensive units include:

No. 1 defends territory; strips interference; stops the play if possible; rushes the passer and kicker.

No. 2 plugs the first line; tackles the ball-carrier; works laterally and backward in pass defense.

No. 3 supports the first two lines on running plays and behind-the-line laterals; defends against passes and short kicks; tackles the runner who has broken into the open field.

No. 4 defends against deep passes and kicks; prevents touchdowns.

The defensive arrangements that have been found most effective are: 6-2-2-1, 5-3-2-1, 7-1-2-1, 7-2-2, 6-3-2, 5-4-2. (And on the goal line, such line-emphasizing formations as 7-4 and 8-3.)

Like offensive formations, each defensive arrangement has its strong points and its shortcomings. The average modern team employs several different defenses in the course of a game and must be the master of at least two: an all-around defense such as the 6-2-2-1 or the 5-3-2-1, and a goal-line defense. It should also be prepared to defend against a spread formation—a wide, loose offensive arrangement that lacks inherent strength but may be fatally confusing to a team that is not prepared for it (see Chapter 10).

Factors in the selection of a defensive formation include:

For a specified team—(1) ability of personnel to carry out

defensive assignments, (2) general character of attack the team expects to meet during the season. (A team in a "passing league," for example, should stress strong pass-defending formations.)

For a specified game—(1) offensive formations used by the opponent, (2) known strong points in the opponent's attack, (3) weather and condition of the field.

On a particular play—(1) position on the field, (2) down and distance, (3) time remaining to play, (4) score, (5) formation used by the offense on that particular play.

Reaction of the defense to the tactical situation will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 10. Here it is sufficient to say that out of its own offensive knowledge, the defensive team should be able to predict with reasonable accuracy the type of play that will be run next. It should go into a defensive formation that is strong against such a play. If the situation is one giving the offense a wide choice, the defense should be one of the general utility arrangements (6-2-2-1, 5-3-2-1) that are fairly effective against all types of plays.

Defensive teamwork is as important as offensive teamwork. Line-backers and linemen must cooperate, as must line-backers and halfbacks, halfbacks and safety. It is often permissible and even desirable for an individual defender to perform in an unorthodox manner on a particular play, but his teammates must know what he is going to do and compensate for him accordingly.

#### FORWARD PASS DEFENSE

It is inadvisable to break down defensive play into "ground defense" and "pass defense," as in a game they cannot be separated. The defensive team must take its position and even make its preliminary moves without knowing whether the opponents are going to run, pass or, in some situations, kick.

It will be helpful to a detailed discussion of the various stand-



ard defensive arrangements, however, to say a word here about pass defense and the three general plans for covering potential receivers.

*Rushing the Passer.*—The most direct and effective way to stop a passing attack is to put pressure on the passer. A determined attempt should always be made to hurry the passer, and perhaps to block the pass or throw the passer for a loss. Defensive problems involved in getting to the passer may be reviewed in Chapter 5 under "Protecting the Passer."

This job must be done by the defensive men on the line of scrimmage, with occasional assistance from a line-backer slicing through as the ball is snapped.

Rushers must be aggressive and vicious, but the defensive plan must always include a safety factor. The ends must remember that the passer may tuck the ball under his arm and swing around them, and their approach should be from the *outside*. Tackles should also be conscious of this responsibility, and guards must beware always of a fake-pass-and-run or a screen pass.

With an experienced, capable line, the safety factor may be the linemen's own quick reactions to a changing situation. With a less efficient line, some rushing may have to be sacrificed to make the play safe.

*Delaying Receivers.*—Again a review of the offensive side of the story will help to illustrate this pass-defending phase. In Chapter 5, under "Getting Open," it was noted that defensive players, particularly tackles and line-backers, can give ends and wingbacks a bad time on or near the line of scrimmage. Receivers may be blocked in, jammed in or shoved until the ball is thrown. All offensive players are potential blockers until the ball is in the air, and defensive players are privileged to use their hands against them.

The receiver may not be held, and it is difficult to delay him long without holding, but even a momentary delay may spoil the pass by disrupting the timing.

*Getting Position.*—The secondary defense must move quickly to positions of advantage when a pass is indicated. In football parlance, it "loosens up," both laterally and in depth.

Pass indications are received from (1) the tactical situation—down, distance to go and position on the field; (2) actions of the man with the ball—fading back, cocking arm, etc.; (3) actions of other offensive players, as linemen dropping back to protect the passer, ends and backs going out.

This admonition applies whatever the plan of receiver coverage. Another general rule is: After the ball is thrown, *play the ball*.

*Covering Receivers.*—This is the phase usually referred to as "pass defense." Potential receivers may be guarded in three ways:

(1) *Man-for-Man.* In this method a defensive player is assigned to cover each eligible receiver wherever he goes. Its chief advantage is that the assignment is clear-cut and definite. Its principal weakness is that it gives a clever receiver opportunity to out-manuever an individual defender. The man-for-man defense is hardest pressed when the ends cross, forcing the defenders to cross. Other criticisms are: (1) A portion of the field may be left unprotected should the "passer" decide to run, and (2) defenders sometimes lose their men when the offensive team shifts them around.

(2) *Zone.* In this method each pass defender has a designated area to cover. At the pass indication the defenders fade back, watch the passer and play the ball. A slow man can do a better job on zone than on man-for-man defense. Its main weakness lies in the fact that the passing team may shoot two or three receivers into the same zone (see Chart 4-C, page 58). If the rushers are not functioning effectively and the passer has plenty of time, the zones will get too large for one man to cover. Other criticisms: (1) Defenders do not have definite responsibility, and (2) a man covering a zone into which no eligible receiver comes is wasted on that particular play.

(3) *Combination*. This method gives the defenders alternate responsibilities, depending on the actions of the receivers. There are several types of "combination" defenses. The term usually means that certain defenders will cover certain receivers man-for-man while other defenders will play zone. Or the defenders may fade to advantageous positions and adjust themselves as the play develops. For example, the outside line-backer in a 5-3-2-1 defense against the T formation may cover the man in motion man-for-man, but if the receiver goes deep he turns him over to the halfback and returns to cover his zone.

The typical plan of combination coverage is: Halfbacks take offensive ends man-for-man, line-backers and safety play zones.

Obviously the combination defense requires coolness and quick thinking on part of the defenders to avoid confusion. They must be thoroughly schooled in their assignments and switchoffs. Once mastered, it is the most effective method of guarding pass receivers.

As all coaches and players know, there is no foolproof, airtight method of defending against the pass. There is always a weakness if the offense is smart enough or lucky enough to hit it. The *practical essentials* of pass defense are: (1) Make the passer get rid of the ball in a hurry, (2) make it difficult for the receivers to get out in a hurry and (3) try to place or move the secondary defenders so they will always have a reasonable opportunity to break up the pass or tackle the receiver almost immediately. It is imperative to protect the deep territory, letting opponents complete some of the short passes if necessary to eliminate the "home run" variety.

#### PROTECTING TERRITORY

Mentioned in the preceding chapter was the individual line-man's responsibility for protecting a designated territory. Fitting the picture together, we visualize five, six or seven men positioned and charging in such a manner that the lateral area

from end to end along the line of scrimmage is well covered. The offensive team usually will attempt to disrupt the spacing of this front line by moving one of its components to the right or left.

That brings us to an important point in defensive line play: It is better for a lineman to give ground *backward* than *laterally*.

The reason is obvious: If one lineman is moved to the left or right, the spacing is destroyed and a gaping hole is made. The fact that the other linemen are carrying out their territorial assignments won't help much. The damage is done, and the ball-carrier is through for a gain.

This, then, is a cardinal rule for a lineman: If forced to give ground, *he should retreat over the same route by which he advanced*. In this manner he preserves the front line as a defensive unit. If he retreats doggedly, fighting for every inch, the line will bend a little in his sector but it will not break.

(These points do not apply to the lateral movements of linemen, particularly ends, who are moving out to meet a wide play. Care should be taken, however, to maintain protection against cutbacks.)

Line spacing may be disrupted also by a lineman who overcharges or takes the "easy way around." As stressed in the preceding chapter, a lineman cannot afford to avoid pressure; instead he must meet it and repel it.

#### DEFENSIVE FORMATIONS

*The 6-2-2-1 Defense.*—This defense is generally considered to be the best balanced arrangement against a well balanced attack. If scout reports and other information indicate that this week's opponents can run to either side, pass short and deep, and quick-kick, and that they can do any one of these about as well as another, very likely the coach will choose the regular 6-2-2-1 as his primary defensive formation.

A defensive axiom is: Meet strength with strength. Within certain limits the 6-2-2-1 setup may be varied to that end.

If the scout reports that the opponents' strong side attack is much better than their weak side attack, the coach may decide on an *overshifted* 6-2-2-1 defense. In this variation the defensive line will be shifted a "full man" to the strong side of the offense.

On the other hand, if the opposition's short side attack is especially feared, the answer may be an *undershifted* 6-2-2-1 in which the line shifts a full man to the weak side of the offense.

When the line shifts in one direction, the line-backers compensate by shifting in the opposite direction. The halfbacks position themselves directly behind their respective ends, which means they shift *with* the line.

Lateral spacing of all defensive players in the regular, overshifted and undershifted 6-2-2-1 arrangements is shown in Chart 42. Spacing in depth of the secondary defenders also is noted.

The overshifted and undershifted sixes may be used handily as sideline defenses in conjunction with the regular six: *Overshift* to the long side of the field when the offensive formation is strong that way; *undershift* to the long side of the field when the offense is strong toward the sideline.

Against a team that shifts from a preliminary formation, the defense may line up in a regular 6-2-2-1 and shift according to the strength of the opponents' finish formation.

A comparison of the undershifted and overshifted spacings as shown in Chart 42 with the seven-man line spacing in Chart 46-B, page 160, and the five-man line spacing in Chart 44, page 158, will reveal these pertinent points:

1. The *overshifted* six is equivalent to a seven-man line on the strong side and a five-man line on the short side.
2. The *undershifted* six is equivalent to a seven-man line on the short side and a five-man line on the strong side.

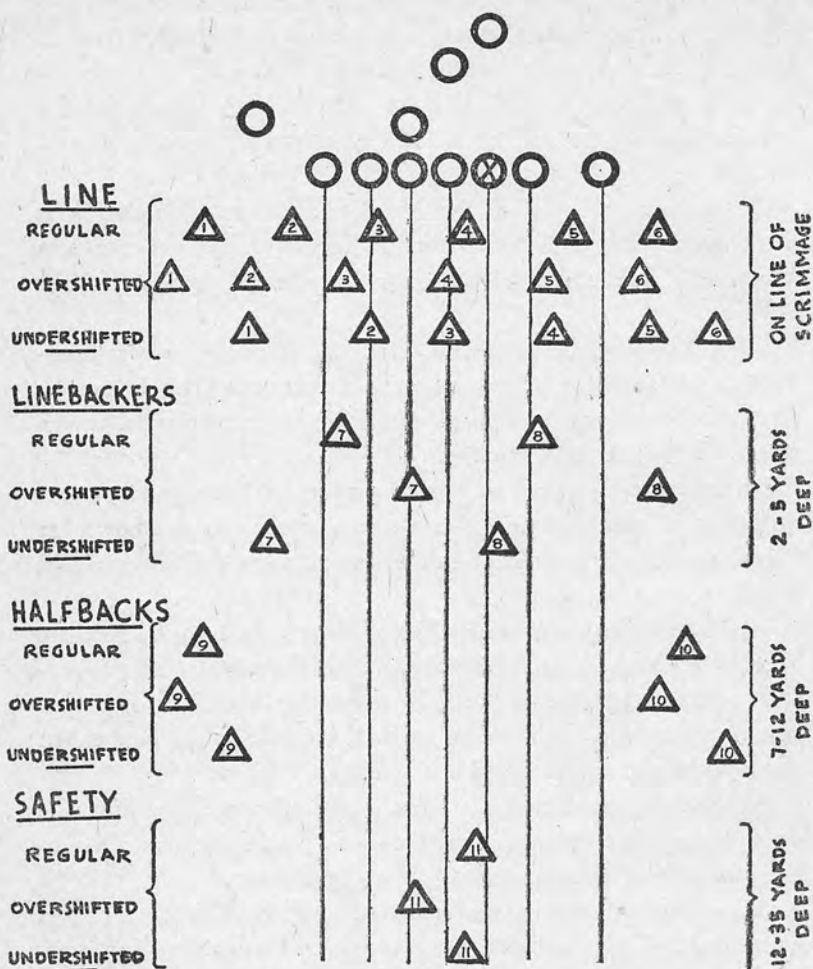


Chart 42: *Lateral Spacing—6-2-2-1 Defenses*  
Against single wingback.



(Note: This is something for the offensive quarterback to remember when he identifies the defense.)

Whatever the defensive arrangement, individual linemen must adjust their actions to *the position of their line-backers*. For example, a tackle and end closely supported by a line-backer can be a bit more aggressive on defense than when they lack this support.

We have said that the 6-2-2-1 is a fine all-around defense. It depends heavily on good line-backing, for with a six-man line the line-backers get a majority of the tackles. If the six front men have done their job well, however, the ball-carrier will be left without interference.

The ends penetrate two or three steps at a 45-degree angle, assuming inside responsibility and stripping the interference. The tackles also work to the inside unless they feel outside pressure, in which case they react against it. The guards charge hard and low across the line, taking responsibility for the territory between them. All six linemen rush the passer, unless the short side end or tackle is used to cover the flat zone when a pass is indicated. Note: When the short side is the sideline side, the threat of a flat pass is decreased.

The halfbacks are responsible for outside running plays and laterals; they must come up fast to the outside if the offensive ends block. (See Chart 42, page 154, for positions of line-backers and deep backs.)

The 6-2-2-1 defense can be modified to a form of 5-3-2-1 by dropping a guard out when a pass is indicated. This guard remains responsible for running plays through his territory, but he is also in position to cover the middle short zone on pass defense. Conversely, the 5-3-2-1 is often modified into a 6-2-2-1 by the middle line-backer's moving into the front line.

Two examples of 6-2-2-1 defense against popular formations, with suggested pass coverage, are shown in Chart 43.



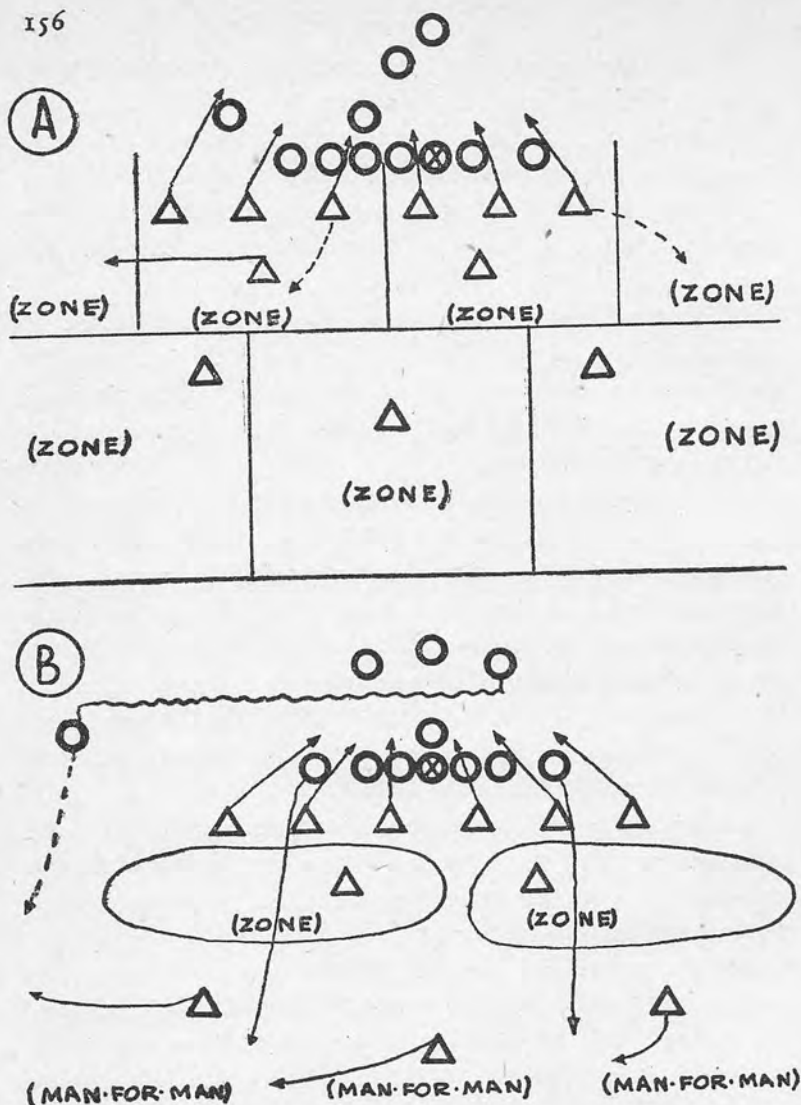


Chart 43: 6-2-2-1 Defenses

(A) Against single wingback formation, zone pass receiver coverage, guard dropping back on pass indication. (Note: If weak flat zone is against sideline, end may disregard it.) (B) Against T formation, man in motion. Line-backers must pick up delayed receivers coming out on their respective sides.

Note: The regular 6-2-2-1 is a good defense against the short punt formation, the various single wingback formations, the double wing and the T. The overshifted six is especially strong against the single wing. The undershifted six is good against a team that hits hard to the weak side, and against an unbalanced line it is a good arrangement from which to rush the passer.

*The 5-3-2-1 Defense.*—The ends in a five-man line crash hard at a 45-degree angle into the enemy backfield. The tackles also favor the inside, but after their initial charge they do not attempt to penetrate deeper unless a pass is indicated. Both ends and both tackles should rush the passer. The guard in the line plays directly over the middle man in the opposing line. He must watch for quarterback sneaks and other quick plays up the middle, and he should rush the passer.

The outside line-backers are responsible for outside plays. The middle line-backer checks his own territory first and then moves to support the outside line-backers. The halfbacks come up fast to the outside on running plays.

The 5-3-2-1 defense is shown in two typical variations in Chart 44.

Note: This defense is recommended against a passing team. It is generally considered the best defense against the T formation.

*Man-in-motion.*—Because the use of a man in motion is sometimes confusing to the defense, it is advisable to speak parenthetically of two methods of defending against it from the 6-2-2-1 and 5-3-2-1 arrangements.

One method is the so-called "revolving zone," in which the appropriate halfback moves out and up with the man in motion and the safety moves over into his zone. In a 6-2-2-1 setup the line-backers adjust in the opposite direction, leaving the defense a cockeyed 6-3-2.

With a 6-2-2-1 formation, however, man-for-man coverage may prove more satisfactory. The halfback moves out and up

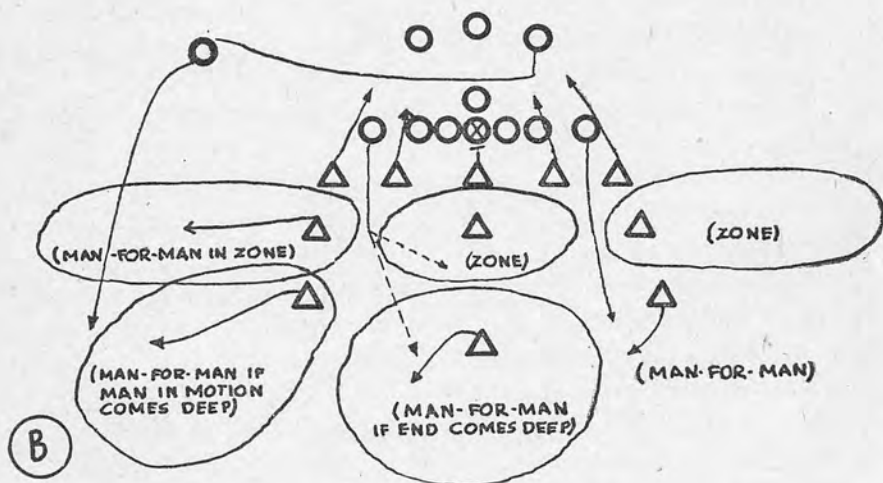
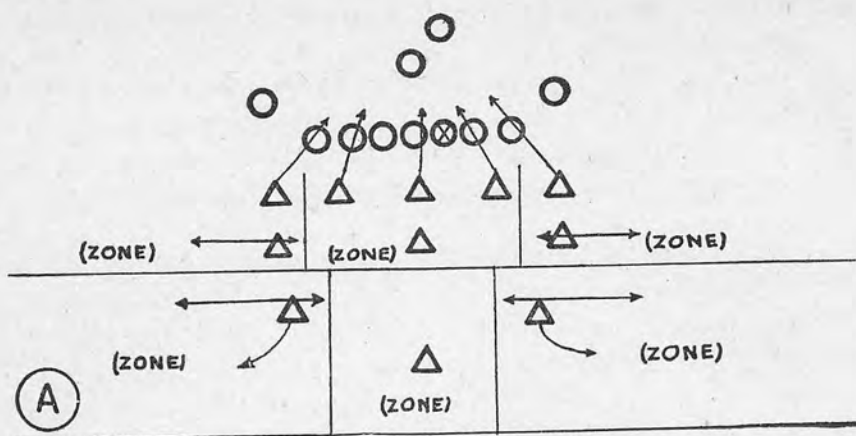


Chart 44: 5-3-2-1 Defenses

(A) Against double wingback formation, zone coverage of pass receivers. (B) Against T formation, man in motion. Outside line-backer covers man-in-motion through his zone, turns him over to half-back. Other line-backers must pick up delayed receivers.

to take the man in motion. The safety moves well over and takes the end on the "motion" side. The opposite halfback adjusts slightly toward the middle and takes the other end. The line-backers pick up other backs coming out on their respective sides, or play their zones.

The end may cover the man in motion in a 6-2-2-1 defense, with other linemen angle-charging in the same direction and the line-backers adjusting in the opposite direction.

With a 5-3-2-1, this is a good defense: The outside line-backer picks up the man in motion and carries him through his zone, then turns him over to the halfback. The halfback plays this opponent man-for-man thereafter, with the line-backer returning to his zone. The safety adjusts toward the motion side and plays the offensive end on that side man-for-man if he comes deep; otherwise the safety plays zone. The opposite halfback takes the end on his side man-for-man. The other two line-backers play zone.

Another sound defense for the T formation with man in motion is the 5-4-2. Its setup and assignments are shown in Chart 45.

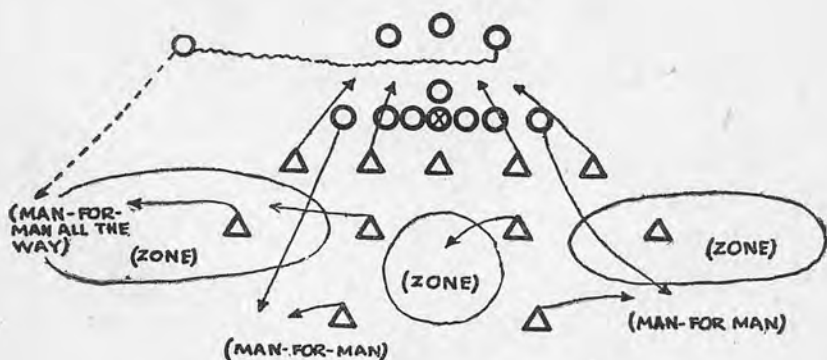
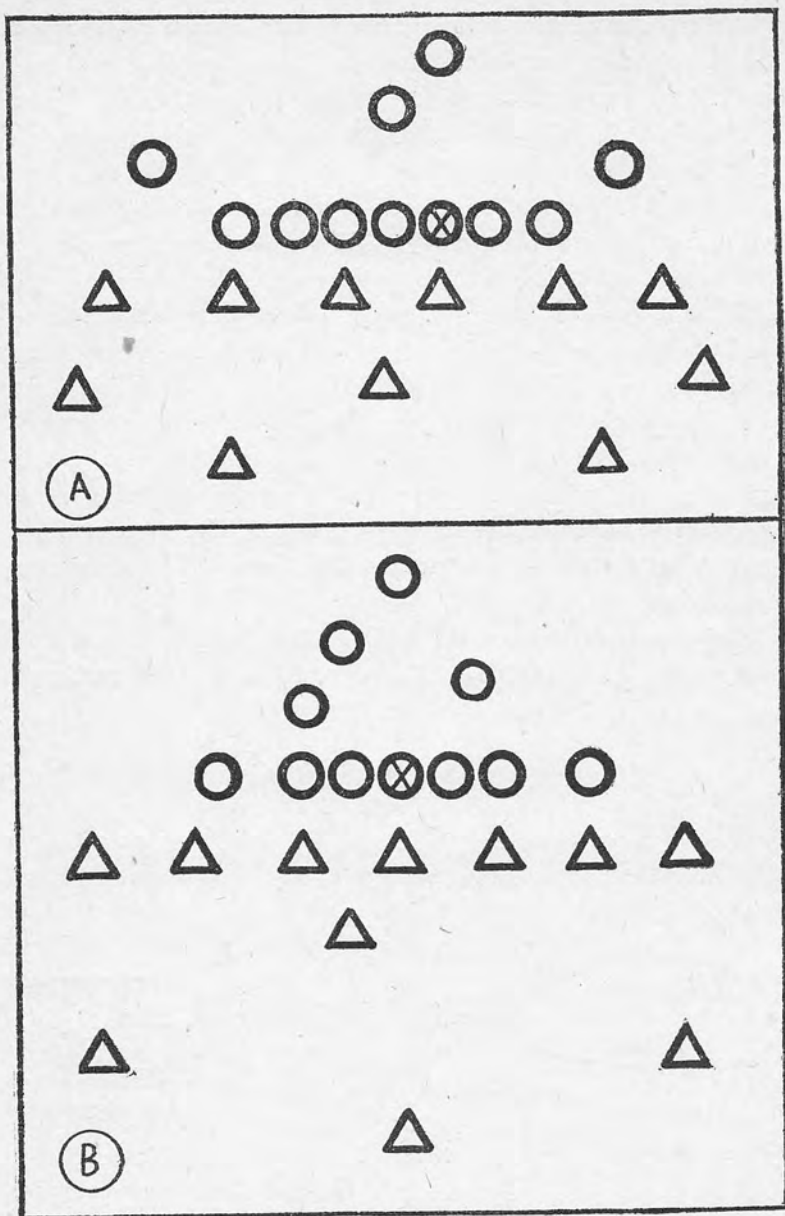


Chart 45: 5-4-2 Defense  
Against T formation, man in motion.

Chart 46: *Minor Defenses*

(A) 6-3-2 against double wingback. (B) 7-1-2-1 against short punt.

*The 6-3-2 Defense.*—Spacing in this defensive arrangement is shown in Chart 46-A.

The ends crash, assuming inside responsibility and rushing the passer. The tackles play in front of the ends and charge through them, trying for a spot directly behind the offensive end positions. If a pass is indicated, they should delay the ends before going on to rush the passer. The guards charge through their opponents, protecting their territory and rushing the passer.

The middle line-backer ranges in the territory between his tackles, while the outside line-backers are responsible for wide plays and delayed plays. Because of this outside support and because there is no safety man, the two deep backs do not come up so fast as in other defenses. This defense is weak against deep passes, especially down the middle. To offset this weakness, the middle line-backer works back unusually deep when a pass is indicated.

Note: The 6-3-2 is an excellent defense against the double wingback formation, if the ends do a good job of crashing through the wingbacks and the tackles succeed in delaying the offensive ends on passes.

*The 7-1-2-1 Defense.*—Defensive spacing is shown in Chart 46-B.

This defense is not so popular as it was when most teams stressed power running over passing. It is not a good formation from which to defend against the pass, and the fact that it has only one line-backer makes it vulnerable to long gainers on quick-opening plays. It is especially hard to break up flat passes from the 7-diamond.

It is a very good setup, however, from which to rush the passer and kicker. If the offensive team does not protect its passer well, its passing game may be disrupted by an aggressive seven-man line.

A 6-2-2-1 may be converted into a 7-1-2-1 by a line-backer's moving into the line. On sure run-or-punt occasions, both line-backers may move in.

In seven-man-line play the guards and tackles protect their territory while the ends must take outside responsibility. The center plays in the line, between his right guard and right tackle. He must ward off blockers and be prepared to fade out to cover the short right-center zone on passes.

A variation of the 7-diamond, the 7-2-2, is even stronger against running plays but is quite vulnerable to quick kicks and passes on which three receivers go deep.

Note: The seven-man line defenses are not recommended for all-around use but are handy spot defenses—for example, at each end of the field and on third down, small yardage.



## *Football Generalship*

OF INESTIMABLE value to a football team is a cool, confident, brainy and resourceful field general. He is the lad on whom we depend to call the right play at the right time. Unless he does a good job, all our best-laid plans and preparations will go for nothing.

Generalship has been described as good common sense. A player who possesses certain qualities of leadership, has a good football head and is thoroughly familiar with his weapons of attack will do a workmanlike job of running the team if he merely exercises his common sense. He will have as guideposts certain basic rules of generalship, time-tried and battle-tested. He will have the benefit of the scout's report and the coach's suggestions.

If in addition he possesses imagination and an analytical mind that functions in the heat of competition, he is likely to be more than a capable signal-caller—he is likely to be a great one.

### SELECTING THE FIELD GENERAL

The signal-calling responsibilities may be delegated to any one of the eleven players on a football team. It is best for the field general to be a backfield man. He should be in position to observe the play as well as to participate in it, and especially

must he keep informed as to the deployment and maneuvers of the defense. A lineman does not have much of an opportunity to observe the action outside of his own area of operation.

It is not necessary that the field general be the star ball-carrier or passer; in many respects it is better for him to be one of the lesser lights. Teams have suffered because a star called his own number too often or not often enough. If a team uses a formation with a blocking back, it is well for that back to be the signal-caller. In the T formation the quarterback should always be the signal-caller. So traditional is this arrangement that the terms "quarterback" and "signal-caller" have come to be almost synonymous. In the remainder of this discussion they will be used interchangeably.

Of more importance than position are certain inherent attributes of a good quarterback. First of all, he must be a leader—a boy who has confidence in himself and inspires the confidence of others. Not only must he know what to do—he must be able to make the team do it. A brilliant signal-caller in whom the team, for some reason, has little confidence is likely to be less successful than the mediocre strategist whose personality and leadership fairly pull the rest of the team along with him.

If a player has leadership, it follows almost inevitably that he has certain other quarterback's requisites: courage, poise and the competitive instinct. And very likely he will have some mechanical ability. Unless the quarterback is able to contribute his full share to the mechanical phase, the team is paying a high premium for his brainwork.

The quarterback must have the intelligence to select plays correctly and the initiative to take chances when that is the thing to do. He must be resourceful, varying his tactics to meet changing situations. He should have a good voice, so he can snap out his signals in clear, crisp, commanding tones.

In summary, a field general must have:

1. Leadership (includes courage and the respect of the team).

2. Brains.
3. Initiative and resourcefulness.
4. Good voice.
5. Some mechanical ability.

#### TRAINING THE FIELD GENERAL

The coach must spend more time with his quarterbacks than with any other group. Extra meetings should be arranged, during the day or occasionally in the evenings, and the coach should seize upon every casual opportunity to talk football strategy and tactics with his field generals.

It is the coach's responsibility to see that the quarterbacks (1) grasp the overall plan and concept of generalship, (2) know the plays thoroughly and (3) master certain general rules of operation.

The quarterback must be made to realize, first of all, that signal-calling is no grab-bag procedure. He will be told that his primary assignment is to throw his strength against the opponents' weakness. In order to do this, he must know what his strong plays are under given conditions and circumstances. He must master the principles of defense as well as offense, for he must observe and even predict the shifting of defensive strength to stop his successful plays. He must know how to take advantage of these defensive shifts with check plays or new tactics.

In the beginning he may have the popular impression that good quarterbacking consists of pulling one surprise after another upon the unsuspecting opposition. If so, he must be firmly disillusioned. No capable opponent is going to be fooled on every play. If that were possible, we could skip all those arduous hours of blocking and tackling, forget about individual techniques, throw our carefully planned sequences and series of plays out the window and concentrate on learning a bunch of trick stuff.

Trick plays have their place in football, but they are the

frosting on the cake. The same may be said of an orthodox play used in an unorthodox manner—for example, a forward pass thrown from behind one's own goal line or a running play on fourth down in midfield. There are times when such plays will work, but for only one reason: By adhering to conservative methods and an orthodox plan, the quarterback has built up a certain situation and a certain state of mind on the part of the defense. A radical departure from the orthodox now will pay a handsome dividend.

Likewise the quarterback will learn that deception must be a secondary phase of the attack. Plays based on deception will be effective only when and if the opponents have learned to respect his basic plays.

The quarterback must be taught the significance of the *tactical situation*—down, yardage to go, score, time to play and position on the field. He will learn to shape and modify his attack plan according to the opponents, the limitations of his own team, and the weather. He will be told when to kick, when NOT to pass, when NOT to hit the middle of the line, when NOT to run wide, what to do on the goal line and what to do on the sideline.

He, and the rest of the team, will be assured that he is the absolute dictator in the huddle and that no interference by others will be brooked.

Along with these principles of field generalship, the quarterback will be given plenty of opportunity to ask questions and will be called on to solve hypothetical situations in the lecture room and on the practice field. A typical question would be: "Third and seven on opponents' 30, muddy field, score tied in last quarter—what's your play?"

#### THE GENERAL'S AIDS

In addition to chalk-talks, lectures, conversations and prac-

tice on the field, the quarterback will have the benefit of certain prepared material. He will be provided with a quarterback's manual and a quarterback's map for off-field study, and before a particular game he will have the scout's report.

In connection with the manual, he will be reminded that the principles and rules set down are sound and practical—but that it is impossible to make a rule for every situation. The manual is for his guidance. If he follows it, he will not make any glaring mistakes. There will be times, however, when he must break rules with impunity. Only experience and his own resourcefulness can tell him when to throw the rule book out the window.

As for the quarterback's map, he will be reminded of Bill Roper's appropriate remark: "A quarterback's map is a good servant but a poor master."

He will understand that the advice in the manual and map is predicated on normal conditions—score even or in your favor, considerable time left to play, weather good, wind favorable (or no wind), you have a good kicker and a good defense.

Theories and hypothetical questions are fine, but practical application is better. During games it is well to have an assistant coach keep track of plays called, the tactical situations in which they were called and the results obtained. The head coach can use this record as a basis for between-halves advice to the quarterback. After the game it is ideal material for the coach and quarterback to study together. And it makes a valuable reference book for the files.

At Austin, Texas, High School, Coach Standard Lambert has copyrighted a *Quarterback's Blue Book* in which forms are provided for entering pertinent information on every play in the game. Space is left for the coach's post-game comments on each play selection, and summary sheets are provided for an analysis of the running, passing and kicking games. A specimen page of this valuable record book is shown in Chart 47.

Down and Distance	Position On Field	Play	Ball Carrier	Gain Loss	Defense	Comments
		K.O.	TECH KICKED	To 20-T	DAVIS RET To 32	Don't return for 300 close to right sideline for 100 yards play.
1-10	R-32	38	QUINN	-2	5-3-2-1	
2-12	R-30	39	QUINN	9	5-3-2-1	Good selection - that end man and
3-3	M-39	38	LEE	12	5-3-2-1	See? You had enough room this time
1-10	R-49	PASS 55	LEE To McCALL	27	5-3-2-1	Time! You didn't expect pass on 1st 10
1-10	L-22	37	QUINN	37 (Td)	5-3-2-1 (6-0)	You set up play perfectly! Bad snap.
		E.P.	T. ALLEN-KICK	QUINN-HOLD-600	(7-0)	Not that big
		K.O.	T. ALLEN KICKED	To 7-Tech	RET To 45	Not that big
(Note: Now we get ball) TECH KICKED To Our 22-BAUMGARDNER RET To 47						
1-10	L-47	30	CANADY	3	6-2-2-1	Thurman changed defense on 24
2-7	R-#50	32	K ALLEN	2	6-2-2-1	You still haven't seen the change
3-5	L-48	PASS 56	LEE To WISWELL	INC. 6-2-2-1	Good selection - tough block.	
4-8	L-48	PUNT	LEE PUNTS To 12-Tech	RET To 39	Good too slow - getting down.	
(Note: Now we get ball) CANADY INT. TECH PASS On Our 15, RET To Tech 12						
1-10	M-42	36	SMITH FUMBLED	-Tech	RECOVERED On Own 10.	
(Note: Now we get the ball) COOKE BLOCKED PUNT - RECOVERED By BANKS						
1-8 (6)	R-8'	37	REV. BAUMG.	6	8-3	They pass here? Running
2-2 (6)	M-2	PASS 57	LEE	INT. BY TECH	BEHIND GOAL LINE	game ok.

## QUARTERBACK'S MANUAL

### A. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Your job is to pit our strength against the opponents' weaknesses.
2. Learn all you can about the opponents in advance and keep studying them throughout the game.
3. Know all your plays, when and where they should be used and what the opponents will have to do to stop them.
4. Know your own teammates thoroughly.
5. Keep cool and confident under all circumstances.
6. Have a reason for every play.
7. Repeat successful plays.
8. Always know the tactical situation: down and distance, score, time to play, position on the field.
9. Consider the weather.
10. Make the opponents respect your basic plays before uncovering your tricks.
11. Know when to kick, when not to pass, what to do on the goal line.
12. When in doubt, punt.

### B. OPPONENTS

1. Hit the opponents' weak spots.
  - a. As indicated in scout reports and other advance information.
  - b. As observed in the game.
  - c. As indicated by defensive alignment on a particular down (checkoff play).
2. Take advantage of defensive tactics.
  - a. Run around smashing ends.
  - b. Run inside deep-penetrating tackles.



- c. Run over waiting linemen; trap aggressive linemen.
  - d. Run around a tight line; run through a loose line.
  - e. Pass long against a compact defense; pass short against a receding defense. (But remember it is hard to get long passes off if your passer is being rushed.)
  - f. Use reverses against a sliding or angle-charging line.
  - g. Use cross-blocking plays against a hard, straight charging line.
  - h. When defense strengthens at one point, observe where the strength came from and change tactics accordingly.
- 3. Know who stopped your play.
    - a. Use your own eyes.
    - b. Get information from teammates.
    - c. If tackle was made by opponent out of position, try a companion play through his position.
  - 4. Learn quickly how opponents are covering your pass receivers.
  - 5. Run a play at an injured opponent or a substitute; throw a pass into the territory of an opponent who has just fumbled.
  - 6. Kick often to a team with a good defense and weak offense; kick less often to a team with a strong offense and weak defense.

#### C. DOWN AND DISTANCE

- 1. The general rule is: On first and second downs, try for touchdowns; on third down, try for a first down.
  - a. First down: Use a strong play that should make five yards or more if it works.
  - b. Second down: Long gainer or pass.
  - c. Third down: Short yardage, try for first down; long yardage, try a long gainer or punt.

- d. Don't get over-methodical in the exercise of these general rules.
2. Don't try to make a first down on short-gaining line bucks exclusively.
3. Remember passes are generally more effective on early downs than on late downs.
4. Second and two is a good time to pass; third and two is a poor time to pass.

#### D. THE SCORE

1. The general rule is: Play conservatively when ahead; gamble when behind; take necessary chances when the score is even, but don't forget that a tie is better than a defeat.
  - a. When seven points ahead, be conservative. Let the other fellow make the mistakes.
  - b. Ahead six points or less, unless late in the game, you need another touchdown.
  - c. Two touchdowns ahead, try for the clincher.
  - d. Behind one touchdown or less, unless late in the game, don't get desperate.
  - e. Behind three points or less, think of a field goal.
  - f. Behind 12 points or more, shoot the works.
2. When ahead late in the game, *don't pass*. Play kicks safe.  
· Hold the ball.
3. After scoring late in the game, if still behind, think of a short kickoff.

#### I. TIME ELEMENT

1. Know when to press your team.
  - a. In the scoring zone.
  - b. With the wind.
  - c. When behind in the score.

2. Know when to slow the pace.
  - a. Against the wind.
  - b. When ahead in the score.
  - c. When playing for time.
3. Know how to spend or conserve time.
  - a. To stall, run line and wide plays; don't pass.
  - b. If behind, run out of bounds; pass.
4. Take chances near the end of each half if in opponents' territory.

#### F. POSITION ON FIELD

1. From own goal to the 20 is the *danger zone*.
  - a. Think of getting the ball out as quickly and safely as possible.
  - b. A punt is usually the best play, although not always.
  - c. If run is used, avoid ball-handling plays. Give it to the back least likely to fumble.
  - d. If the defensive halfbacks drop back on first or second down, a pass in front of them is fairly safe. But do not call it unless your passer is cool and capable.
  - e. Don't wait until fourth down to kick.
2. From your own 20 to your own 40 is the *run and kick zone*.
  - a. Use safe plays through the middle and off the tackles.
  - b. Don't use lateral passes or end sweeps.
  - c. Pass only if the defense is crowding in.
  - d. Don't use up your men in grinding out short yardage in this zone—you cannot march 70 or 80 yards on short gainers against good opposition.
  - e. This is the ideal quick kick zone.
3. From your own 40 to opponents' 40 is the *run, pass and kick zone*.
  - a. Use long-gaining ground plays and long passes.

- b. Don't kick before fourth down, unless you have a good reason.
4. From opponents' 40 to the 20 is the *forward pass zone*.
  - a. All types of passes are permissible here.
  - b. Good fake-pass-and-run zone.
  - c. Sweeps and spinners may be used.
  - d. Kick out of bounds.
5. From opponents' 20 to the five is the *special play zone*.
  - a. Think of backward and lateral passes, double reverses, fake-run-and-pass plays.
  - b. Watch for an opportunity to run a trick play.
6. From opponents' five to the goal line is the *scoring zone*.
  - a. Off-tackle plays are good—middle bucks not so good.
  - b. Give the ball to your best back.
  - c. If end drives in and stops play, run it wider.
  - d. Keep calm, cool and collected; run plays fast; keep up the fight; no fouls, no fumbles.
  - e. On fourth down, ball should be squarely in front of goal posts—in position for a field goal, sweep, flat pass, any play.
  - f. You have a planned attack for this zone, but don't change your tactics if they are working.
7. On the sideline.
  - a. With ball moved in 17.8 yards, all your plays except sweeps and wide laterals toward sideline are feasible.
  - b. Expect overshifted defense toward long side of field.
  - c. Defense will be set for sweeps to long side. Off tackle or to the short side is a better bet.

#### G. WEATHER

1. Take advantage of the wind
  - a. Kick often with the wind (second or third down).
  - b. Think of long passes with the wind.

- c. Hold ball against the wind.
- 2. Play conservatively on a wet field.
  - a. Kick often (second or third down).
  - b. Avoid wide plays and cutbacks.
  - c. Don't be afraid to pass. The present rules will keep a fairly dry ball in the game.
  - d. Try to avoid bad spots on the field.

#### H. YOUR PLAY

- 1. For short but fairly sure gainers, use direct line plunges and slants.
- 2. For potentially good gains without danger of a long loss, call cutbacks, spinners, in-and-outs, "safe" passes.
- 3. To gamble on a long gain against a potentially heavy loss, try sweeps, reverses, laterals, long passes.
- 4. Remember the quarterback's law of compensation: To make your wide plays work, make opponents respect your line plays; to make line plays work, carry the threat of a sweep or pass; to make your passing game work, run with the ball and vice versa.
- 5. If opponents consistently use an overbalanced defense to meet your strongest attack, observe its weakness and hit it until they are forced to adjust. (Any defensive formation that is abnormally strong in one respect is abnormally weak in another.)
- 6. Know thoroughly your *check* and *series* plays.
  - a. Check plays are designed to hit the area from which opponents have shifted strength to meet your strength.
  - b. Series plays are those which start alike but develop differently.
- 7. Set up your deceptive and trick plays carefully.
  - a. Remember you can't hope to fool the opposition on every play.

- b. Trick plays usually work best when opponents are upset, after a fumble or a long gain.

# I. YOUR TEAM

1. Get maximum efficiency from your backs.
  - a. Know them thoroughly—their abilities, shortcomings and temperaments.
  - b. Don't use up your best boys in your own territory.
  - c. Know whom to depend on for first downs and touchdowns.
  - d. Use a "hot" man freely.
  - e. In general, save your best line-plunger for the vital short gains.
  - f. If a substitute is inclined to be nervous, don't use him on the first play.
2. Know who your best offensive linemen are. When you must have a yard or two, go over their positions.

# J. WHEN TO PUNT

1. The general rule is: The closer to your own goal, the earlier the kick.
2. The normal procedure under normal conditions (score even, plenty of time, no wind disadvantage, a fairly good kicker) is as follows:
  - a. Behind the 10-yard line, kick on first down.
  - b. Between your 10 and 20, preferably kick on second down and not later than third. (If you do not gain five yards or more on first down, kick on second down. If you feel you can make a first down in one more play, take a chance on having to kick on third down.)
  - c. Between your 20 and 35, try to avoid kicking on

- fourth down. (If on third down you feel confident of making first down, take a chance.)
- d. Between your 35 and the 50, kick on third or fourth down. (If on third down you have five yards or more to go for first down, kick the ball.)
  - e. In opponents' territory, kick on fourth down. (Don't lose the ball on downs outside the opponents' 40-yard line. If the opponents are very strong offensively, don't lose the ball on downs outside the 30.)
3. Remember the probability of a blocked kick increases with each down.
  4. Kick earlier when ahead; take more chances when behind. (However, with long yardage to go on an early down, it is advisable to kick early to avoid wasting valuable time.)
  5. Kick to a team with a weak offense; hold the ball against a team that is dangerous offensively.
  6. If you are outpunting the opposition, you will kick oftener than if the reverse is true.
  7. Don't overlook the wind factor.
    - a. Kick oftener with the wind.
    - b. Hold the ball against the wind.
    - c. Remember to kick before losing the wind at the end of the first or third quarter.
    - d. Remind your punter to kick high with the wind, low against the wind.
  8. Run some plays from deep punt formation.
    - a. Take deep punt formation on early downs in your own territory, even if you don't intend to kick.
    - b. Shoot plays at over-anxious rushers.
  9. Check the protection of your punter.
    - a. Watch deployment of defense, rearranging protection if necessary.
    - b. If facing an eight- or nine-man line, remind ends to bump defensive players before covering punt.



10. Anticipate kicking situations.
  - a. Avoid calling on punter to carry the ball on play preceding a kick.
  - b. Give some consideration to your ends. They can't be expected to go down for passes two or three times in a row and then cover a punt efficiently.
11. If you have used your quota of time-outs and need another, try to call it just before a punting down.
12. When in doubt, punt. This is the only rule that should never be broken.

## X. YOUR PASSING GAME

1. Know when NOT to pass.
  - a. The general rule is: When the danger involved overbalances the prospect of success, or when the opponents are obviously expecting a pass, do not pass.
  - b. As a rule, don't pass inside your 35-yard line, especially into the wind.
  - c. When you are ahead late in the game, *don't pass*.
  - d. On third down, short distance to go, make first down by running the ball.
  - e. When the running attack is going good, especially near opponents' goal, don't change tactics merely for the sake of variety.
2. Make good use of fake passes.
  - a. Use them to worry aggressive rushers.
  - b. Favor them in orthodox passing situations, such as third down, long yardage.
  - c. Remember the use of fake passes will help make your passes work.
3. Know the best positions and times for passes.
  - a. Between your 35 and the 50, favor long passes.

- b. Good times to pass are: first down; second down, short yardage.
- c. Don't develop habits of passing only on certain downs or from certain positions on the field.
- 4. Take advantage of opponents' defensive habits.
  - a. Pass over secondary players who come up fast.
  - b. Pass in front of secondary players who drift back fast on pass indications or to cover deep receivers. Use flat zone and "third man out" passes.
- 5. Save a couple of good pass plays for the last half.
- 6. *Don't wait until you are behind to start passing.* The forward pass is much more than a gesture of desperation.

## DEFENSIVE GENERALSHIP

Defensive generalship is based on a thorough knowledge of offensive generalship principles. It might be described as offensive knowledge applied in reverse.

This means you will expect the opposing team to respond to the tactical situation more or less as your team would if it had the ball. This general assumption will be modified, of course, by your knowledge of the opponents' habits as gleaned from the scout reports, from newspaper accounts of previous games and from observation as the game progresses.

The defensive quarterback should be one of the line-backers, because these men are in an intermediate and upright position from which they can observe the deployment of the offense and at the same time communicate both with the linemen and the deep backs. The center is an ideal choice for this assignment.

## SIGNALS

Signals usually are given by word of mouth and consist of a series of numbers or letters, or both. In simplest form, de-

<p>SCORING ZONE</p> <p>Keep Cool—Drive Hard—Ball to Best Back</p>	G
<p>SPECIAL PLAY ZONE</p> <p>Lateral Passes, Double Reverses, Trick Plays (Keep Using Successful Plays) Place Kick on Fourth Down</p>	5
<p>FORWARD PASS ZONE</p> <p>Also Fake Passes, Sweeps, Spinners Kick Out of Bounds (4th Down)</p>	20
<p>RUN, PASS AND KICK ZONE</p> <p>Long Passes, Long Gainers Kick on 3rd or 4th Down</p>	40
<p>RUN AND KICK ZONE</p> <p>Safe Plays Kick on 2nd or 3rd Down</p>	40
<p>DANGER ZONE</p> <p>Get the Ball Out! Kick on 1st or 2nd Down</p>	20  G

Chart 48: *Quarterback's Map*

fensive signals consist of double-digit numbers giving the numerical strength of the first two lines of defense (i.e., "62," "53," "71"). Letters may be added to effect a variation of assignments from the regular. For example, "62-E" might be a six-man line and two line-backers, with the ends dropping back if a pass is indicated. Hand signals may be used to convey information to the deep backs.

Another method, using hand and finger signals exclusively, is for the defensive signal-caller to take a position in front of his team while the opponents are in their huddle and give his signals. This system has the advantage of entirely concealing the signal from the opposition. A distinct disadvantage is that the defensive signal must be given before the signal-caller has a chance to look over the offensive formation. The same disadvantage applies to use of a defensive huddle.

Players should talk to one another on defense, exchanging information and giving the alarm if a tipoff is spotted. However, the information should be something more concrete than a mere hunch.

#### PRINCIPLES

We have said that the offensive quarterback's task is to throw strength against weakness. As a corollary, we may say that the defensive quarterback attempts to meet strength with strength.

To that end he calls on his background of offensive knowledge and his store of information about the attacking team. Thus he will know:

1. What the opponents *should* do under a particular set of circumstances.
2. What the opponents like to do or have done under similar circumstances.
3. What factors of strength or weakness in the opponents' lineup may be expected to modify these assumptions.

A simple example of the applications of these principles might

be the following: Opponents have ball on their own 25, field dry, wind at their backs, score tied in the second quarter. Normally a punt on second or third down would be expected, but this team likes to run the ball out past the 30, if possible, before kicking. Team usually plays a conservative game, rarely passing in its own territory. However, a substitute back is in the game whom the scout has warned is the opponents' best passer and an expert quick-kicker. Defensive quarterback's decision: There is some danger of a pass or a quick kick. Calls 5-3-2-1 defense or a 6-2-2-1 with guard alerted to drop back if a pass is indicated. Safety alerted for a deep pass or quick kick.

The defensive quarterback must do some fast and fancy thinking in his attempt to out-guess the offensive signal-caller. Before each play he must answer these questions, in a few seconds:

1. What can the opponents do best from this formation and in this tactical situation?
2. What are their most logical alternatives?
3. What are they, within reason, unable or unlikely to do in this situation?

The following examples may be helpful:

(A) Opponents have ball on the 50, third down and 15 to go for a first down. They come out in double wingback formation with their passer back. A forward pass may logically be expected. Defense must watch for a fake pass and handoff, such as the Statue of Liberty, or a fake-pass-and-run. Straight running play very unlikely. Defensive quarterback orders a loose defense, probably a 5-3-2-1, with ends charging over the wingbacks and rushing the passer, other linemen rushing, outside line-backers bumping the ends and looking out for reverses, other backs favoring the deep zones. The defense is perfectly willing to give opponents a few yards through the line to strengthen itself against long gainers.

(B) Opponents have ball on the 50, one yard to go. On second down, defense expects first a pass or a long-gaining

ground play; second a fake pass and run, third an attempt to pick up the first down; probably chooses a regular 6-2-2-1. On third down, fully expects an attempt to plunge for first down; plays a tight seven-man line or a six with both line-backers in close. On fourth down, opponents in deep punt formation, ends rush, other linemen and line-backers play for a plunge, half-backs and safety man for a punt.

(C) Opponents have ball on the 50, first and 10. Defense must be prepared for anything. Uses a 6-2-2-1 or 5-3-2-1.

Late in the game, with the defensive team ahead, the defense will be inclined to loosen up and allow the opponents to make short running gains and complete short passes in order to strengthen itself against long passes and all-the-way runs. If the defensive team is behind, it will be fighting for every yard and attempting to put terrific pressure on the kicker.

In the scoring zone an 8-3 or 7-4 defense should be used, with the backs playing as close to the line as they can while still in position to cover the end zone against passes.

#### SPREAD DEFENSE

As mentioned in an earlier chapter, an unprepared team can be badly hurt by a spread formation. A typical spread is shown in Chart 49, with a suggested defense. The same defensive principles may be applied to any type of spread formation.

#### CAPTAIN'S OPTIONS

Another phase of football generalship, not necessarily the quarterback's responsibility, concerns the captain's options at the pre-game toss and when fouls are called against the opposing team.

Here are some good general rules for the captain:

1. If you win the toss and there is a strong wind, take the wind. It may die or shift by the second quarter.

2. If you win the toss and there is no wind advantage, take both teams' abilities into account in choosing between kicking off and receiving. If you have a good kickoff man, it is generally to your advantage to kick off. (This is definitely true if you have a kicker who can boot the ball into the end zone, forcing opponents to put the ball in play on their 20.) If your

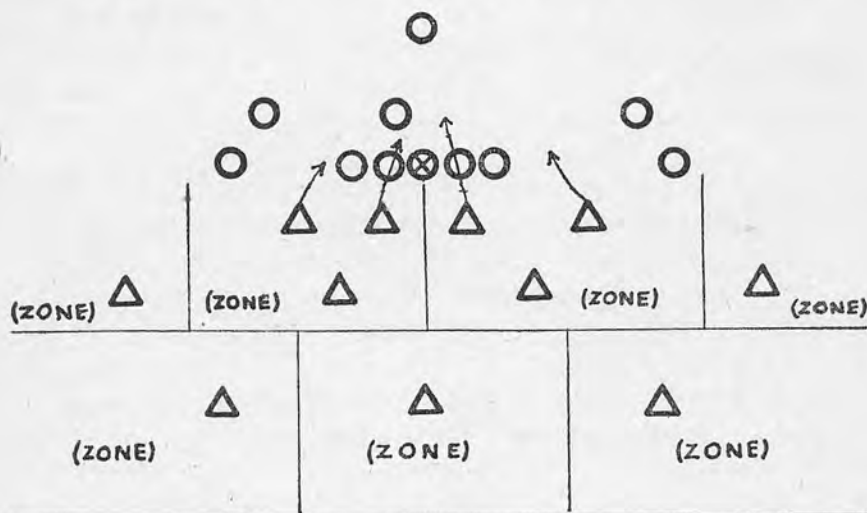


Chart 49: *Defense against Spread*  
Ends dropping back, zone coverage of pass receivers.

kickoff man is weak or your team is especially strong at returning kickoffs, you may choose to receive. Remember, however, that if opponents have an end-zone kickoff man, you probably will have to start your offense from the 20-yard line.

3. If you lose the pre-game toss and have the option at the half, apply these same general rules with this possible exception: If the wind is strong and has shown no indication of dying out or shifting, you may choose to buck it in the third quarter in order to have it behind you in the last quarter.



*Note:* The coach will go over these options with the captain before the game and between halves, and they will plan their alternatives with special conditions of the game, field, weather and opposition in mind.

When a foul is committed, the captain of the offended team has his choice of the play or the penalty. The referee will carefully explain the option and the captain will make his choice on this common-sense basis: Will we be in better position as to down and distance if I take the penalty or let the play stand? In most cases the choice is obvious; in some cases there is little to choose. The captain will never shun an alternative that gives his team a first down or touchdown and he will never choose one that gives the opponents a first down or touchdown.

The coach should spend some time with his captain, and other players (usually the seniors) who may serve in the captain's absence, discussing hypothetical options. All players should have a working knowledge of the rules. The captain in particular should know his own rights and restrictions as the team's field leader, and he should be familiar with all the rules to aid him in making an intelligent choice when he has an option.

*Scouting*

THE SCOUT is the "intelligence section" of the football staff. His reports form the basis for the entire game plan, offensive and defensive. It necessarily follows that the reports must be accurate and thorough, in general and in detail.

In no sense is the football scout a "spy" or a shady character. Scouting is an entirely legitimate activity, unless there is a special agreement between two teams to the contrary. In some conferences and leagues there are rules or agreements limiting the number of times an opponent may be scouted; in others there are no limitations. Whatever the rule may be, it should be religiously observed.

If time allows, a scout should always pay his respects to the officials and coaches of the team he is observing. This gesture will help to create and preserve friendly relations between the teams involved and keep the business of scouting on a frank and above-board basis.

## QUALIFICATIONS

The foremost and indispensable qualification of a football scout is a sound, thorough knowledge of football fundamentals and formations, offensive and defensive. He must be so familiar with standard alignments and with standard blocking, pass and

defensive patterns that the slightest deviation from the normal will stand out like the proverbial sore thumb. He must be able to recognize and analyze offensive and defensive values. He must be minutely observant of detail. Variations in spacing, individual stance and individual action must be spotted and checked as possible tipoffs. Only an experienced and advanced student of football can do a first class scouting job.

#### PREPARATION

In selecting the game or games in which to scout an opponent, the coach will be guided by two considerations. He wants his scout to see the opponent in action against a strong team, for such a game will establish truer values than one against inferior opposition. But he does not want to scout the opponent too early; there might be later lineup changes or revisions of offense or defense that would render the early scout dope almost worthless. He usually will settle for the opponent's game or games that fall nearest to his own.

Opponents should be scouted at least twice if time and regulations allow—the second time to check and extend the basic information obtained on the first look.

It is well for the same scout to cover the same team year after year. He becomes thoroughly familiar with its personnel, system and habits. His task is simplified, for he will be looking only for variations from last year's plays and methods.

Well in advance of the game to be scouted, arrangements should be made for a press box ticket or, if these are not available, for a reserved seat high in the stands. Schools and colleges traditionally exchange complimentary scout tickets, and many now maintain separate scout booths.

Before leaving home, the scout checks over last year's reports and runs movies of last year's game if they are available. If his team did not play this particular opponent last year, he checks any old reports and movies in the files. For weeks he

has been following this team in the newspapers, familiarizing himself with its personnel and forming tentative theories as to its strongest points, its favorite weapons and its defensive merits.

As soon as possible after reaching the site of the game, he will obtain a program or newspaper lineup and probably commit to memory the number, name and position of each player on the first two teams. These will be checked carefully before and during the game, along with any substitutes who show up well. He will be especially watchful for specialists (passer, punter, place-kicker, speed merchant, pass-catcher) whose entry into the game might provide a tipoff as to the opponent's strategy.

But before the game starts, the scout has other chores to do. He has arrived at least an hour before kickoff time, armed with notebooks and pencils. He records any last-minute information as to injured players. He studies the playing field. If his team is to play there later, he makes careful note of the condition of the turf and how the field lies in relation to the sun and prevailing wind. Current weather and field conditions are noted.

#### OBSERVATION

When the team comes out for its pre-game warmup, he checks the color of its uniforms and headgear. He observes carefully the warmup drills, especially those of the punters and place-kickers. He will check the various punters individually on the following points: distance back of center, number of steps, fast or slow getting away, height and distance of kicks, whether spiral or end-over-end. Quick-kickers also will be spotted and their efficiency evaluated.

During the game he keeps close track of formations used and where they are used; charts typical, unusually strong and out-of-the-ordinary plays, with blocking assignments; notes favorite pass patterns; watches particularly for variations from the normal and orthodox. He notes the various defensive arrange-

ments used against the team he is scouting and their relative effectiveness.

When the team is on defense, he observes how it deploys its men in various tactical situations and notes the effectiveness of the different defenses. He is especially interested in how the team covers on passes and how it returns punts.

He will note how the team covers and returns kickoffs; how it protects the passer and kicker, and how well; whether it habitually employs fake passes and fake kicks and in what situations.

All along he is studying the individual players, to size up their relative abilities and techniques and to spot possible variations of stance or action that might be valuable as indications. A tailback may move back a foot when he is going to quick kick—a wingback may “fudge a little” when he is going to carry the ball on a reverse—a lineman may “point” the direction of the next play. An alert scout will catch some of these telltale habits and mannerisms.

As quickly as possible after the game he will transfer his rough notes and diagrams to a Scout Report form, such as the one outlined in later pages of this chapter. If he is to see the team in another game, he will merely smooth out his notes and charts and prepare to re-check them before making the final entries in the Scout Report.

First step in preparing for the week's game is for the scout to go over his report with the rest of the coaching staff and make his recommendations as to logical offensive and defensive tactics. He will talk to the squad at least once and probably two or three times during the week. On the bulletin board he will post clippings and pictures of opponents, diagrams of offensive formations and strong plays, diagrams of favorite defensive formations and his own comments as to characteristics, style of play and merits of individual players.

For the players he may prepare and mimeograph a digest of his scout report listing personnel, strong plays and general deductions.

He will chart opponents' typical and special plays on large cards, to be used by the freshmen or reserves in running plays against the varsity.

Finally, he will attend the game in order to be of any assistance he can to the head coach and to check the accuracy of his scout dope with an eye to future games. His scout report, with appropriate post-game comments and annotations, will be filed away for reference next season.

#### REPORT

Out of long experience and with the assistance of some very capable football scouts, the writer has evolved a Scout Report form which has proved quite complete and satisfactory. It is summarized in the pages immediately following for two reasons. First, it will provide in compact form a check list for use of scouts. Second, it will prove a handy guide for the coach who desires to prepare his own scout report form. Our method has been to have the forms mimeographed on 8½x11-inch sheets and bound in flexible cardboard covers.

For the sake of compactness, we are eliminating most of the diagram forms and the spaces that should be provided for the scout's notations and comments.

## SCOUT REPORT

*Page 1*

Team Scouted .....  
Year .....  
Scout .....

*Page 2*

## PRELIMINARIES TO SCOUTING FOOTBALL GAME

1. Pay respects to opponent's Athletic Office.
2. Arrive early at game, provided with program and scouting material.
3. Take high seat near middle of field (or in scout booth).
4. Have request for scout ticket made early to assure good seat.
5. Study scouted team through newspaper in games not seen.
6. Study opponents of scouted team to insure better conclusions.
7. Study prior scout reports and moving pictures of team to be scouted.
8. Study early workout for identity of players—the capabilities and characteristics of punters, place- and drop-kickers and centers.

## DURING GAME

1. Do not draw on your imagination—plot and record plays as you see them.
2. Concentrate on one thing at a time.
3. Keep in mind the down, score and position on field to enable you to anticipate the coming play.



4. Recheck from end zone for spacings when in doubt as to exactness.
5. Do not attempt to complete the Scout Report during the game.

## AFTER GAME

1. Complete the Scout Report immediately after the game.
2. Gather newspaper clippings and notes of interest on team scouted.
3. Display on your team's bulletin board:
  - (a) Clippings and pictures of opponents.
  - (b) Diagrams of offensive formations and strong plays.
  - (c) Diagrams of defensive formations opponents expected to use against us.
  - (d) Characteristics and style of play of individuals.

## Page 3

Team Scouted ..... vs. ....  
 Date ..... Time ..... Place .....  
 Field Cover? ..... Condition of Field .....  
 Wind: Rate ..... Direction .....  
 Weather .....  
 Color of Uniforms: Headgear ..... Jersey ..... Pants .....  
 Coach ..... Captain .....

(Above form duplicated on same page, in case team is scouted twice.)

## PUNTING PRACTICE

(Chart form, space for three names; lines for each of the following: Name and number; distance back; steps; right or left

foot; speed in getting off; type—high, low, spiral; any quick kicks.)

#### PLACE- AND DROP-KICKERS

(Chart form, space for three names; lines for each of the following: Name and number; distance back; number of steps; distance from goal.)

#### KICKOFFS

(Chart form, space for three names; lines for each of the following: Name and number; distance; height; direction.)

#### *Pages 4-7*

#### STARTING LINEUP AND SUBSTITUTES

(Chart form for each position, with space for following: Name; number; weight; experience; chief characteristics and ability.)

#### *Page 8*

#### KICKOFF

Direction ..... Distance ..... Height .....

1. Give lineup by number on kickoff and position on field.
2. What men (by number) are down first?
3. What men (by number) are down last?
4. Does anyone act as safety?
5. Would you suggest a return punt?
6. Any attempt at a short kickoff?
7. Do ends go straight down or have a tendency to concentrate on the ball?
8. Is kickoff made from center of field?

9. Who are the consistent tacklers?
10. Do opponents cover kickoff with proper spacing?  
(Balance of page left blank for comments.)

*Page 9*

RECEIVING KICKOFF

(Chart of football field, from far 40-yard line to receiver's goal, ruled off in five-yard stripes.)

1. Diagram on field position of each man. Underscore dangerous receivers. Indicate movement of interferers.
2. Individual assignments on blocking? Wedge?
3. Are tacklers blocked at once or do interferers drop back and block?
4. Do they use a backward pass or a return punt?
5. Is a short kickoff practical?
6. Do halfbacks run straight up sidelines or converge toward center?
7. Is formation effective? Why?
8. Emphasize any unusual method of returning kickoff.

*Pages 10, 11*

RUNNING PLAYS

1. Is their running game based primarily on speed, or power, or deception, or a combination?
2. Check four types of running plays they favor in each of the following lists:

Direct Plays: (1) straight bucks, (2) slants, (3) cut-backs, (4) in-and-out sweeps, (5) straight sweeps, (6) ..... Delayed Plays: (1) split bucks, (2) delayed bucks, (3) spinners, (4) fake reverses, (5) single reverse, (6) double reverse, (7) laterals, (8) shovel

- passes, (9) trick plays, (10) fake pass and run, (11) fake punt and run, (12) .....
3. Why were their running plays effective?  
(1) Elusive ball-carriers, (2) speedy ball-carriers, (3) driving ball-carriers, (4) line blocking, (5) interference, (6) threat of passer, (7) clever ball-handling, (8) good quarterbacking, (9) weak opposition.  
(Space left after each to answer question, "Who?")
  4. When are two men used on the end?
  5. When are two men used on the tackle?
  6. Is interference general or individual?
  7. How well do ends box defensive tackles?
  8. What linemen come out to lead interference?
  9. Are these linemen fast? Run low? Point?
  10. Do their plays show good timing?
  11. What are their first-down plays?
  12. What are their goal-line plays?
  13. Any quick lineup plays?
  14. Do they try for a first down on second down with small yardage?
  15. Is the downfield blocking effective?
  16. Do ball-carriers reverse field or break toward sideline just after they get through the line?
  17. Do they huddle? How?
  18. Do they use a preliminary formation?
  19. Do they ever run off preliminary formation? Percentage .....
  20. Do they get set before their shift?
  21. Do they try for deception in their shift?
  22. Do they ever double shift?
  23. Does the defense have ample time to meet the shift?
  24. Do they ever go direct into formation after the huddle to run "surprise" plays?
  25. Do they ever shift to make tackle or guard eligible for passes?

26. What formation is used most?
27. What formation is used next most frequently?
28. What formation is used for long yardage?
29. What formation is used for short yardage?
30. What formation is used primarily in defensive territory?
31. What formation is used primarily in offensive territory?
32. What formation is used primarily on goal line?
33. Diagram on the following pages:
  - a. Huddle.
  - b. Set before shift.
  - c. Shift.
  - d. All offensive formations with exact positions and spacings of players with their numbers.
  - e. Favorite running plays.

*Pages 12-19*

Diagrams and comments.

*Pages 20-23*

#### DEFENSE AGAINST RUNNING PLAYS

1. When is a five-man line used?
2. When is a six-man line used?
3. When is a seven-man line used?
4. What is the defense on the goal line?
5. Is the defense "converging" or straight across?
6. What type plays is the defense strongest against? Why?
7. What type plays is the defense weakest against? Why?
8. Who are the outstanding defensive men?
9. Who are the weakest defensive men?
10. Does the line charge as a unit?
11. Do any adjacent linemen leave wide opening by the direction of their charge?
12. Where are the weakest spots in their line for long gainers?

13. Where is the weakest spot in their line for "sure" short gainers? Why?
14. Does the defense defend against first downs or against touchdowns as indicated by their style of play with short yardage to go on second down?
15. How does the defense as a whole change its style of play with changes in down, distance, position on field and strength of formation? Discuss.
16. How do they line up against a flanker?
17. How do they cover a man in motion?
18. Who directs the defense? Do they meet the situations properly?
19. Defense of guards:
  - a. Use arm shiver or shoulder?
  - b. Charge high? When?
  - c. Submarine? When?
  - d. Hit and drift? When?
  - e. Charge straight ahead or toward strong side?
  - f. Change style of play with changes in down, distance, position on field, strength of formation?
  - g. Can guards be trapped?
20. Defense of tackles (left and right):
  - a. Do tackles use shoulder, or hands, or both?
  - b. Do tackles play end or wingback first?
  - c. Protect primarily to inside or outside?
  - d. Charge high or low?
  - e. Hit and drift?
  - f. Can tackles be pulled out of position?
  - g. Can tackles be trapped? Easily blocked?
  - h. Are they "busters"?
  - i. Ever criss-cross with ends?
  - j. Ever catch plays going in the other direction?
  - k. Do the tackles change their style of play with changes in down, distance, position on field and strength of formation?

21. Defense of ends (left and right):
  - a. Do ends crash? Float? Wait?
  - b. Protect inside or outside primarily?
  - c. Shifty and fast?
  - d. Play wide or in close?
  - e. Ever criss-cross with tackles?
  - f. Easily blocked?
  - g. Will end ever let a back line up outside of him?
  - h. Where do ends play against spread?
  - i. Do ends change their style of play with changes in down, distance, position on field and strength of formation?
22. Defense of line-backers (left and right):
  - a. Protect inside or outside primarily?
  - b. Active outside their own tackles?
  - c. Can we draw them out and then go up middle?
  - d. Diagnose plays well?
  - e. Meet plays with determination?
  - f. Do line-backers change their style of play with changes in down, distance, position on field and strength of formation?
23. Defense of halfbacks (left and right):
  - a. Do halves meet running plays fast or slow?
  - b. Do halves protect primarily to the outside or to the inside of their ends?
  - c. Does weak-side halfback pull out of position on strong-side plays?
  - d. How do halves play potential laterals?
  - e. What is the ability of halves to tackle in open?
  - f. Do halfbacks change their positions with changes in down, distance, position on field and strength of formation?
24. Defense of safety:
  - a. Does safety play conservatively or does he come up fast to make tackles?



- b. What changes does the safety make in his style of play with changes in down, yards to go, position on field and strength of formation?

(Comments)

*Pages 24, 25*

Diagrams of opponents' defenses against running plays, giving exact spacing of linemen and depth and arrangement of backs.

*Page 26*

#### FORWARD PASS OFFENSE

1. What part does their passing game play in their offense?
2. What is their favorite formation for passing?
3. Are they consistent on down and distance to be gained when they pass?
4. Who does most of the passing?
5. Are any of their passers left-handed?
6. Who are the star receivers?
7. Do they risk a pass thrown diagonally across the field?
8. Throw passes deep in their own territory?
9. Is intention to pass concealed?
10. Where are most of their passes completed?
  - a. Long (beyond halves)?
  - b. Medium (between halves and line-backers)?
  - c. Short (between linemen and line-backers)?
11. Is shovel pass used often?
12. In what lanes of defense are most of their passes completed?
  - a. Middle (deep or short)?
  - b. Wide (deep or flat)?
13. Do they use many running passes?
14. Double pass before forward?
15. Passes quick or delayed?

16. Who protects passer?
17. Are all passes well covered?
18. Any special passes used?
  - a. Sideline?
  - b. Lineman eligible?
  - c. Fake field goal or on extra point?
  - d. After fake punt?
19. Any especially tall ends?
20. Season's record: Games.....No. thrown.....No. complete ..... No. intercepted .....

*Pages 27-29*

Diagrams of opponents' favorite passes and receivers.

*Page 30*

#### FORWARD PASS DEFENSE

1. Do they use man-for-man? Zone? Combination?
2. Who covers weak side flat?
3. Who covers a flanker?
4. Who covers a man in motion?
5. Any linemen pull out for pass defense?
6. What part does safety man play in pass defense?
7. How deep do line-backers retreat?
8. How deep do halfbacks fade?
9. Does line rush passer fast? Who?
10. Is pass defense changed on different parts of the field?
11. What is their goal line pass defense?
12. Where is the strength in their pass defense? Why?
13. Where is the weakness in their pass defense? Why?
14. Season's pass defense record: Games played ..... No. passes attempted by opponents ..... No. completed ..... Intercepted by .....

15. Which phase or phases of pass defense do they emphasize?
  - a. Rush passer?
  - b. Cover receivers?
  - c. Hold up receivers?

*Pages 31-33*

Diagrams of forward pass defenses.

*Page 34*

#### LATERAL PASS OFFENSE

1. Type used: Fake buck and lateral ..... Run and lateral ..... Forward pass and lateral ..... Lateral from punt or kickoff .....
2. Do their basic running plays have possibilities for lateral passes?
3. What part does the lateral pass have in their offense?

#### LATERAL PASS DEFENSE

1. Do ends check lateral running backs or a flanker?
2. Do ends cover well to the outside or converge?
  - a. On punts?
  - b. On kickoffs?
3. Do halves play wide on goal line?
4. Any particular weakness against lateral passes of any type?  
(Comments)

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Diagrams of lateral pass plays.

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## PUNTS

1. Are ends fast? Good tacklers?
2. What linemen (tackle to tackle) go with snap of ball?
3. Who on kicking side does most of the tackling?
4. Is blocking individual or position?
5. Do ends protect well on outside or converge?
6. How many steps does kicker take?
7. Right or left-footed kicker?
8. Kicks high or low? Tries for distance or out of bounds?
9. They favor kicking on which down?
10. Does kicker ever fake a punt and run with ball?
11. In covering punts, which side of line gets down first?
12. Do they ever quick-kick? From what formation?
13. Any tipoff on their quick-kicking?
14. Type of punt: High ..... Low ..... Spiral .....  
End over .....
15. Can we block their punts? How?
16. Will any of our planned returns work against them? Which?

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Diagrams of kicking formations with exact spacing, blocking assignments and coverage by waves.

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## DEFENSE AGAINST PUNTS

1. Do ends rush kicker?
2. Do all linemen rush kicker?
3. Do ends and tackles leave themselves vulnerable to a fake-kick-and-run or to a quick-opening run?
4. Do ends fall back with opposing ends?
5. Do ends or tackles check opposing ends?

6. Do ends allow opposing ends to line up outside of them?
7. How far back do halves play when punt is expected?
8. Do halves fall back with ends or come up to meet them?
9. Do halves fall to the inside to get their blocking angles?  
How far?
10. Any set formation to block kick?
11. One or two men back on punting downs?
12. Center in line?
13. Whom do line-backers block?
14. Which way does safety man return punt?
15. Is it better to kick to or away from the safety?
16. Any special plays used to return punt?
17. Can we quick-kick on them?

(Comments)

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Diagrams of defensive formation when punt is expected and any set plays used to block or return a punt.

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#### OFFENSIVE GENERALSHIP

1. What is your estimate of the quarterback?
2. Where did he use good judgment?
3. Where did he use poor judgment?
4. Does he appear to have a reason for his plays, or does he just reach into the bag?
5. Does he use his plays in sequence? Go by the Quarterback's Map?
6. Does he always run one of his best plays on first down?
7. Does he play for first downs or for touchdowns?
8. Does he pass on first down?
9. Does he pass with short yardage to go?

10. What are the plays he depends on to make first down?
11. What are his goal line plays?
12. Does he appear to control the huddle? Have command of his team?
13. When does he use his trick plays?
14. Does his generalship change in the second half?
15. Does he repeat gainers? Losers?

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#### DEFENSIVE GENERALSHIP

1. Who directs the defense?
2. Are defensive signals used? How given?
3. When is five-man line used? Six-man? Seven-man?
4. What is your estimate of the defensive quarterback?
5. Where did he use good judgment?
6. Where did he use poor judgment?
7. Does he size up the offensive situation and call his defense accordingly?
8. How well is he able to anticipate the offensive play?
9. Is there any particular weakness in his defensive quarterbacking that we can take advantage of?

(Comments)

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#### CONDITION AND ATTITUDE

1. What is the physical condition of the opponents as a team?
2. Are any regulars out with injuries?
3. Is the team on the up or down grade?
4. In games scouted, which team was rated the underdog?
5. Were any stars withheld?
6. Did their opponents open up?

7. What is your prediction as to probable frame of mind of opponents when they play us?

*Pages 43-50*

Additional pages for notes and suggestions concerning best offensive and defensive tactics to use against this opponent, statistical information and so forth.



## *Organizing the Program*

FOOTBALL coaching is an all-year job. The regular season is the high-pressure period, of course, and spring training is another busy time, but the conscientious coach will have little trouble finding something to do any day in the year. Between seasons a great deal of planning, corresponding, arranging, contacting and studying must be done. Schedules must be completed, train and hotel reservations made, equipment ordered, accommodations for players arranged, grades checked and the physical plant maintained.

In many respects, the easiest and certainly the most enjoyable hours of a football coach's year are those spent on the practice field actually coaching football.

### SPRING TRAINING

A new football year begins with the start of spring training. This period offers an opportunity to stress individual techniques and fundamentals, to instill the rudiments of team play and—most important—make a tentative selection of personnel for next fall's varsity squad.

Spring training should run a month or six weeks, depending on conference or league rules, and should be scheduled with an eye to the weather and with due consideration for the school's

spring sports program. February is an ideal month if the climate is moderate or if a field house is available for bad weather work.

When there are no restrictions on off-season training, most coaches like to start with the freshmen—probably in the field house—and bring them along for three or four weeks, then put them with the returning varsity men for the regular spring training period outdoors.

When spring football training overlaps or conflicts with the spring sports program, this is a good rule to follow: Spring sport varsity men will go with their respective squads; freshmen will stay with the football squad. The sport in season should have priority; at the same time, it must be remembered that freshmen will become eligible for varsity football before they are eligible for varsity spring sports.

The spring training squad will be a large one. This is the time to throw the door wide open and welcome any and all comers to try out. It is a time for individual attention and experimenting. In brief, it is the time to find out "who's who." Group work on fundamentals will be emphasized. Offense will be stressed over defense.

Spring training should be made interesting for the participants. The squad should be divided into teams, which will play a round robin schedule on Saturday afternoons. The usual procedure is to pair off the strong and weak teams in the early games, working up to a final meeting of the two strongest units. To help the regular coaches handle the large squad and the several teams, freshman and B team coaches should help out and even some of the seniors and former stars who are back in school. Specialists from the professional football ranks may be brought in from time to time for demonstrations and suggestions. The boys know these men by sports page reputation, and to have them around is a shot in the arm for spring training interest.

At the close of the training period the coach should have in mind at least 35 boys who probably will help him next fall. On the border line will be possibly 15 to 20 others, depending on the size and class of the school. These names should be put on the list for fall training invitations.

#### LATE SPRING AND SUMMER

Before the school term ends the coach has several important obligations to fulfill. All along he has been keeping close tab on the classroom work of his prospects. He does this for two reasons: the very practical one that students must stay scholastically eligible in order to play football, and because he has found that a boy who is having trouble with his school work isn't likely to do well on the field. It is better in the long run to have a squad of students incidentally playing football than a squad of football players incidentally going to school.

There will be some banquets and ex-students' meetings to attend and summer jobs to find for some of the players. Depending on the rules of his conference or league concerning recruiting, the college coach will do some traveling and talking, and certainly some letter-writing, in an attempt to interest high school graduates in his institution.

He may be invited to lecture at a summer coaching school and at any rate probably will drop in on one or more of these schools during August.

The coach should keep in contact with his boys during the vacation period. An effective method is to prepare and mail at intervals mimeographed letters or postcards, each of which is devoted to one of the games on the fall schedule. Fairly early in August each player should receive a personal letter outlining the plans for fall training and suggesting that he start getting in shape for rough work. The main suggestions will be: Do lots of running—get out in the sun.

### THE SCHEDULE

Football coaches and athletic directors are always working on the schedule. Games are no longer matched overnight, as in the old days; many college teams and some high schools keep their schedules well arranged for one, two and even three years ahead.

Unless there is an exceptional reason for further delay, the coach should have his schedule completed by late spring or early summer. When they start rounding out their schedules, most coaches find that half or more of their games are of the holdover variety and that the dates of these games are already fixed by contract or tradition. From there on they have some discretion as to opponents and dates.

In selecting teams to fill in the schedule, these are some points to remember:

1. A good stiff non-conference game at the start of the season will give the boys an incentive to move out fast in fall training.
2. Letdowns are prone to come after hard games for which a team has been "high." It is more desirable to have "breathers" *after* than *before* your tough games.
3. The boys will always be ready mentally for your traditional games. But watch out for the game with a good team that is not a natural rival.
4. Seek non-conference games with schools and teams of your own class and scholastic standards, and with comparable athletic rules and regulations.

### FALL TRAINING

Length of the fall training period may be determined by conference rules. About three weeks before the first game is a good starting time. If the training routine goes on longer than a month, the players may lose interest and become used up physically.

Before the boys arrive, the playing and practice fields, locker room, training room, lecture room and all other facilities should be readied. Old equipment should be cleaned and repaired and neatly arranged in the storeroom along with the new. Arrangements should be made to house and feed the squad during the training period.

#### EQUIPMENT

Important points concerning equipment include the following:

(1) Buy good equipment. It is more satisfactory and cheaper in the long run.

(2) Standardize. Make as many items interchangeable as possible; don't change color or style of uniforms without good reason.

(3) Stock three sizes of shoulder pads—large for the linemen, medium for the backs and ends, and small for your "jack-rabbits."

(4) If possible, take individual measurements in spring and have each player's equipment on a hanger for him when he reports.

(5) At any rate, check out equipment to early-comers the day before practice starts. This will save a lot of valuable time.

(6) If you must economize, don't do it at the expense of the player's safety. And don't try to save too much money on footballs—have plenty to go around during passing and punting drills.

#### TRAINING ROOM

It is highly desirable for a competent, experienced, full-time trainer to be in charge of the training room. Most colleges have this arrangement; many prep and high schools do not. In the latter case one of the coaches must take over primary responsi-

bility for the team's conditioning, first aid for injured players and treatment of sprains, bruises and pulled muscles.

Every team, no matter how small, must have the part-time services of a physician. Coaches and even professional trainers must not take chances with head injuries or treat limb or shoulder hurts that may be broken bones. Again, this is no place to economize. A coach should never hesitate to send a boy to the doctor or order an injury X-rayed because it costs money. The No. 1 item on his check list must be the welfare of his players.

Before rough work starts, every candidate for the team should have a thorough physical examination by a physician.

The coach who must be his own trainer should qualify himself in diagnosis of injuries and treatment of the minor ones. He must be able to judge the potential seriousness of a practice injury. In case of doubt he will do the safe thing: (1) order the injured player to the sideline, (2) send him to the training room or (3) if there is any serious laceration or the suspicion of a broken bone or brain concussion, send him to the hospital for observation and treatment.

The coach-trainer should procure and study reliable handbooks on the diagnosis, prevention and care of athletic injuries. A handbook published by the National Collegiate Athletic Association in 1933 is still a valuable guide.

#### TRAINING ROOM SUPPLIES

A minimum check list of training room supplies (for a squad of 30 to 40 players) is given below. These supplies should be on hand when the training season starts.

Aspirin tablets, 500.

Adhesive tape, 1½- or 2-inch, 75 rolls.

Ankle wrap, cotton, 2-inch, 4 rolls.

Benzoin or Tuff-Skin, 2 gallons.

Foam rubber, two pieces 18 by 21 inches by  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch thick.

Sterile cotton, 6 pounds.

Gauze, 2-inch, 6 dozen 10-yard rolls.

Sterile dressings, 3x3 inches, 500.

Sterile dressings, 2x2 inches, 500.

Applicators, 12 gross.

Tongue depressors, 6 gross.

Rubbing alcohol, 1 dozen pint bottles.

Merthiolate, 1 quart.

Band-Aids, 600.

Zinc oxide ointment, 1 pound.

Sulfathiazole ointment, 5 per cent, 1 pound.

Analgesic balm, 6 pounds.

Rubdown liniment, 2 gallons.

Salt tablets, 2,400.

Dextrose tablets, 320.

Foot powder, 2 twenty-five-pound bags.

*(A brief discussion of the diagnosis and treatment of practice injuries closes this chapter.)*

#### FIRST DAY

The first day of fall training is an important one. It sets the tempo for the entire training period, and perhaps for the season. Everything must be well organized; the coaches must be prepared and businesslike; an air of determination and enthusiasm should prevail.

The coach will want to deliver a brief summary of plans, requirements and expectations, and he must give some thought to his remarks. He probably will talk along these lines:

To succeed in football takes hard work, team work, speed and spirit. Right now we are as strong as any team we will meet. There is no reason why any team should lick us. Our success depends on our willingness to "pay the premiums"



throughout the season. Football isn't a game for exercise—it's hard work. It must have a strong appeal to the boy who plays it; otherwise, many other things will absorb his interest and he will not do well. He must be willing to do whatever is necessary and give up whatever is necessary to get the job done. The team comes ahead of self. If a player does not keep himself in condition, he loses his ruggedness. He declines morally as well as physically, and his influence is no longer what it should be to the team. The sweet is worth the bitter; the dividend is worth the premiums. If this season is worth starting, it is worth finishing.

These thoughts and others the coach will express in his own words. He may expand on the subject of training rules. Some coaches set down a long list of rules and regulations and require strict observance of them. Others prefer to point out the responsibilities of a player to himself, his team and his school; suggest common-sense rules for staying in condition, and appeal to his sense of responsibility and loyalty. High school boys, especially those starting out in football, need fuller training instructions than older boys, and they are more amenable to discipline. In college the coach must face the cold fact that he cannot control his squad merely by making rules. He must stress, however, these general requirements:

1. Eat wholesome, well balanced meals. Do not overeat, particularly before practice. Establish regular eating habits.

2. Avoid alcohol and tobacco. "There is little question that abstinence from alcohol and tobacco contributes physically and psychologically to the improvement of general physical condition." (*N.C.A.A. Handbook on Prevention and Care of Athletic Injuries.*) At best, self-indulgence is poor advertising for the player, the team and the school.

3. *Get plenty of sleep.* This is the most important rule in the training book. Eight hours is the minimum, and ten is preferable. The player should be in bed by 10 P.M. nightly.

## THE WORK DAY

During fall training the squad should work out twice a day, morning and afternoon. In the South, especially if some of the games are to be played at night, the second workout may be held under the lights.

All through the season workouts will be divided into these components: (1) Calisthenics and warmup; (2) group work and drills; (3) team demonstrations and execution.

The same pattern is followed during the two-a-day period. The morning session will stress lectures and demonstrations; the afternoon session will put into effect the lessons of the morning. Morning work should be physically light and the players will not wear pads. A suggested routine for the morning workout is: 9:30 A.M., chalk talk; 10 A.M., on field for calisthenics and group work; 11 to 11:45 A.M., team plays and demonstrations.

Afternoon workouts will stress contact, and the players should wear full battle gear. Always the coach will make sure that the squad is properly warmed up before starting contact work. Suggested period for the afternoon session is 4 to 6 P.M.

Rough work should be started as early as the condition of the players will allow. If they report in good shape, scrimmage may be started by midweek or even the first day. More likely, the coach will want to concentrate on group contact work and a review of basic formations and plays for the first few sessions.

As the season progresses, the workouts taper off in two respects: They grow shorter, and there is less and less rough work. It takes a lot of scrimmaging during fall training to time and polish the attack, and to accustom the men to game conditions.

At least two scrimmages under regular game conditions will be conducted prior to the opening game.

When school opens, the squad will go on a one-a-day routine and stay on it the rest of the season. A typical schedule: 3 P.M.,

at stadium, dress, care for minor injuries; 3:30 P.M., chalk talk; 4-5:45 P.M., on the field.

Early in the training season each player should be given a rule book and required to study it. From time to time brief sessions will be conducted on the rules.

#### PRESENTATION OF MATERIAL

In addition to the prescribed work on individual techniques, the squad will be given formations and plays as rapidly as it can assimilate them. If the team is to use two or more formations, the coach should select one to start on, carry the team through its basic stages and then double back to the second formation. Finally the two will be fitted together and used interchangeably in scrimmage and practice games.

Some graphic presentation of play patterns is needed at the start. We have found the movable blackboard very useful. Plays are grouped on the various boards with individual blocking assignments carefully charted. As the offense expands, more boards are filled. They are always in the lecture room for study before practice, and they may be carried to the practice field and placed on tripods for handy reference.

If a team is employing the defensive hole system of numbering its plays (see Chapter 7, "Signals"), each play should be charted against a five- and a six-man line.

#### SELECTION OF PERSONNEL

With a game only three or four weeks away, the coach must not waste any time starting the selective process. Since spring training he has been studying his personnel and should be ready to make tentative assignments on the first day out.

The eleven men he selects for the first team on opening day may stay there the rest of the season. It is highly probable that they will not.

Changes will be made among the three, four or five varsity teams every week, and nearly every day, throughout the season. Injuries, the failure of some boys to come through as expected and the improvement shown by other boys will all contribute to the fluid situation. But the coach cannot afford to spend all of his time grading and culling personnel in the fall. It is time for coordinating and polishing, rather than selecting.

This, then, is an appropriate general observation: During spring training the burden is on the coach in selecting personnel. In the fall, the burden of proof is on the player. In other words, a boy will have to prove his right to a higher place before he will be promoted. The experimentation period has passed. This is by no means a cold-hearted attitude; it is the only practical attitude, and the players will understand it. It definitely does not mean that any player will be denied an opportunity to advance. The coach is just as anxious to see the best players on the first team as any player is to be there.

Early training will be conducted with the 50 to 60 boys who were invited to attend the fall camp. In college when classes start two more groups will come out: varsity aspirants who were not invited to the training camp, and freshmen. These groups will be turned over to the B team and freshman coaches, respectively.

At about this time the varsity squad should be cut to approximately 45 men. Players who did not make the grade will be sent down to the B team, or junior varsity.

#### THE B TEAM

It is highly desirable to maintain a B team, if there are enough interested boys to form one. The B team serves several important purposes: It is a good feeder for the varsity squad next year if not this year; it provides "cannon fodder" for the varsity, and it gives more boys an opportunity to play football. A schedule should be arranged for the Bees with teams of their approximate

caliber. They may also participate in a round robin schedule with freshman teams and the varsity fourth string. B team players who show varsity ability will be promoted.

#### THE RESERVES

The fourth string can be made to occupy a unique and useful place in the varsity scheme. It will be composed mainly of youngsters who lack the strength and experience to serve on a higher unit but who are capable enough and promising enough to stay with the varsity squad. Some of them will make the traveling squad and some won't. They can broaden their football background, gain experience and be of real help to the team as a whole by operating as "opponents" for the other varsity strings.

Under this plan the fourth string will be taught the formations and plays favored by the opponent of the week, and will use them in scrimmage against the other varsity units. It may even go into the game as a unit, if a commanding lead has been built up. (On one such occasion in our experience the fourth team entered the game in the last quarter, used the opponents' own plays against them and scored two touchdowns.)

The traveling squad will consist of the first three strings plus spares at key positions such as center, quarterback and tailback, and various specialists.

The entire squad, from the captain down through the scrawniest B teamer, should have a sense of team unity and responsibility. The coach must promote this feeling by recognizing the importance of every cog in the machine, urging the B team men to attend varsity chalk talks and proving by his actions as well as his words that he is interested in every individual who is out for football. As long as he uses ability as his yardstick and plays no favorites, his judgment will not be questioned.

## THE SEASON

## A TYPICAL WEEK

*Monday.*—The first day of a typical in-season football week is a full one, particularly for the coaching staff. The head coach's first thought is to confer with the scout. It is best to get away from the office and such distractions as telephone calls and casual visitors. The lecture room at the stadium is a good place for the head coach and scout to meet. They will go over the scout report thoroughly, and the scout will offer suggestions (Chapter 11). They will agree on a list of the team's present plays that will not work against this week's opponent, those that should work best and any new plays to be added for this game. Next comes the daily coaching staff conference, probably at 2 P.M. The head coach will summarize the scout's report and get the staff's advice on the defensive plan that should be most effective. As usual, the afternoon's program will be planned in detail.

Monday is the last day for thinking about last week's game. If movies have been made, developed and returned, Monday afternoon is the time to show them. (Game movies are an extremely valuable coaching aid. Most colleges now use them, and some high schools. By shipping the films air express both ways, it is possible in most sections to get back on Monday the movies of a game played on the previous Saturday.) Players are asked to come out a little early for the picture and the coach's brief comments.

The scout then talks to the entire squad for 15 minutes, discussing in general terms the personnel, offense and defense of this week's opponent.

On the field, after the warmup, mistakes and slipshod performances in last week's game are corrected in group work.

The team drills will be strictly offensive in nature. Plays to



be emphasized this week will be polished and the new plays put in. The first two teams will run their plays against an inactive "dummy" team, but if the third-stringers did not play a great deal in last Saturday's game they may run their plays under scrimmage conditions.

The fourth team (or B team or freshmen, if varsity manpower does not run that deep) will be over in a corner of the field learning opponents' plays from the scout. Usually some varsity men will miss the outdoor workout Monday because of game bruises and minor strains. They will be asked to attend the chalk talk but may be left in the training room when the rest go to the practice field.

Monday is the longest workday of the week. For most of the players, the practice period stretches from 3 to 6 P.M.

*Tuesday.*—The quarterbacks will come down early for a session with the scout and the head coach. The scout talks to the squad again, this time going into detail about the opponents' offense and the defense to be used against it. (The scout needs to spend some extra time during the week with each of several groups—quarterbacks, linemen and line-backers, backs.) Movies of last year's game, if available, may be shown.

Tuesday is primarily a defensive day. However, as a team never gets through working on its own offense, both phases should receive attention. This is a satisfactory method: After group work, one coach takes the first team and sends it on offense against the B team using the opponent's defense. Another coach takes the second team and works it on defense against the fourth team running opponent's plays. Third-string personnel is split between the first and second teams, and these men fill in from time to time. After a prescribed period the first and second teams will switch.

*Wednesday.*—This is scrimmage day in the football camp. Little time is spent in the lecture room. (If last year's movies were not shown Tuesday, they may be shown at this time. Or the game may be split, the first half being shown Tuesday and



the second half Wednesday. Old movies are of distinct value unless the opponent has changed coaches or formations.)

The scrimmage should be under game conditions, although not necessarily on a full field scale. It is better to move the ball around—midfield, both sidelines, near own goal, near opponent's goal—to give the quarterbacks practice in selecting appropriate plays for those positions. The fourth team will run the opponent's favorite plays from these various positions on the field. The first, second and third teams will be alternated in the scrimmage; the B team may be called on to spell the "opponents," especially on defense.

*Thursday.*—This is dummy scrimmage day. The Thursday workout will not be quite so long as the preceding ones and it will consist principally of a review of all offensive and defensive assignments. There should be no contact work. With three teams running, this is a good plan: One reviews and polishes the plays off one formation, another takes plays off the second formation, the third checks its defense against opponent's plays as put on by the fourth team. The teams will rotate until each has made the full round.

Thursday is a good day to review the passing and kicking games, offensively and defensively. Competition among the three top teams will add interest to the passing drill. They will rotate on offense and defense and record will be kept of their effectiveness in both departments.

Players should be reminded to get a good night's sleep on Thursday night. *This is important*—more important than Friday night's rest.

*Friday.*—This is the lightest day of the week. No hard work is done, even if the team is at home. If it is working out away from home, the practice will consist merely of a 20- or 30-minute warmup with some kicking and passing.

If the Friday workout is on the home grounds, it will start with a blackboard review of material covered during the week and perhaps a final look at last year's movie. On the field each

of the three teams will review defensive assignments, punts and kickoffs, goal line offense and how to get out of the hole. The boys will charge up and down the field a few times and go in. They should not be kept outside more than an hour.

Pre-game rallies at home present somewhat of a problem. This is a good policy: All players and coaches should attend the opening rally and the final rally, which usually will be dedicated to the seniors. In between, it is better for two or three players and coaches to represent the team. Too many rally appearances will take the edge off, both for players and students.

#### ROAD TRIPS

If the game site is within comfortable traveling distance, say as close as 100 miles, it is preferable to spend Friday night at home and go over Saturday morning. A longer trip will be made on Friday, with the team arriving in time for a warmup. Cross-country trips, especially when drastic changes in altitude or climate are involved, may be timed to give the team an extra day on the scene.

Most coaches still prefer to move by train, although buses are convenient for short trips and airplane travel is becoming more and more popular. The airplane cuts down sharply on traveling time, but the weather is a factor that must be considered. When making a long trip by train, it is well to charter at least one sleeping car and preferably two.

Before a trip the coach should check by letter or telephone on hotel reservations, arrange for transportation from station to hotel and from hotel to practice and playing fields, see that the manager has packed all the necessary uniforms and equipment (including mud cleats for use if the field is slippery) and tie up all the other loose ends. An itinerary should be mimeographed and distributed to the traveling party. The itinerary should show the travel schedule and the hours for meals, meetings and

so on, and contain other instructions and information concerning the trip.

After Friday afternoon workout and evening meal, it is well to take the entire squad to a picture show. If possible, arrangements should be made for the players to sit as a group. They will return immediately to the hotel and go to their rooms. "Taps" is at 10 P.M. After that hour all telephone calls should clear through the coach or the trainer. The latter should have a large room which will be headquarters for the players.

#### MEALS

It is especially important for the players to eat correctly between Friday noon and game time. Sliced turkey or chicken is excellent for the main course at Friday dinner, being substantial and yet not too heavy. A suggested Friday evening menu:

- Thick vegetable soup.
- Hearts of celery.
- Sliced turkey on toast.
- Baked potato (small).
- One green vegetable.
- Fruit salad.
- Toasted whole wheat bread.
- Tea or grade A pasteurized milk.
- Vanilla ice cream.

Around 7:30 or 8 o'clock on the morning of the game, the players should have a hearty breakfast—for example:

- Orange juice.
- Hot cereal.
- Small tender steak.
- Dry toast with honey.
- One very small lightly browned potato.
- Choice of drinks.

Approximately three and a half hours before game time, a light lunch should be served, consisting of the following:

- Very small piece of thinly sliced roast beef, or
- Poached egg on toast.
- Dry toast with honey.
- One sliced orange.

The after-game meal should be liberal, well-balanced and tasty. The following menu is merely a suggestion:

- Fruit cocktail.
- K.C. sirloin steak.
- Potatoes au gratin.
- One green vegetable.
- Lettuce and tomato salad.
- Dry or lightly buttered toast.
- Coffee, tea or milk.
- Vanilla ice cream.

#### GAME MORNING

If the game is at home, players will attend morning classes as usual, eat the prescribed light lunch and report to the stadium. No unusual problems are involved here.

The out-of-town morning must be arranged more carefully. Most boys will be up fairly early and will finish their breakfasts by 8 o'clock. Their time is their own until 10:30. From then on they will be under the coach's direct supervision.

Arrangements will be made for a large room in which the entire squad will gather at 10:30 A.M. This meeting has a dual purpose. It gives the coach an opportunity to make any comments he may desire, and it gets the boys out of the hotel lobby. The coach's talk will be brief and usually of a psychological nature. Quite often the morning paper will give him a good text. His aim is to get the players' minds focused on the game, if they need any help, or to calm them if they are inclined to be tense and fretful.

After their 11 o'clock lunch the players will go to their rooms and rest. They will report, when called, to the trainer's room for ankle-taping and the application of any special protective bandages or equipment.

The coach should check ahead of time on dressing facilities at the stadium. If they are not satisfactory, the team will dress at the hotel. In either case, the team should arrive at the stadium in plenty of time to take the field exactly 30 minutes before the kickoff.

#### THE GAME

*Warmup.*—The order of business is: (1) a few calisthenics, (2) passing drill for backs and ends, pulling-out drills for line-men, (3) punting, place-kicking and kickoff drills.

Fifteen or 20 minutes is long enough for the warmup. The squad should come off the field at least ten minutes before the kickoff, at a signal from the coach. This clears the field for the bands and pep squads, or for any pre-game ceremony.

*Locker Room.*—In the locker room last-minute adjustments or replacements are made. The players are seated on benches and the coach names the starting lineup. It is a good idea to have each starter, as his name is called, take his place on a bench in front of the coach. The captain goes out to confer with the officials and the rival captain.

The coach says a few words to the team. He should give some thought beforehand to this talk and try to say something that will put the team in a good frame of mind for the kickoff. There is no set formula for this moment. The coach will know the temper of the squad and how it has reacted during the week. If he thinks the boys are nervous and "tight," he will attempt to settle them down. If he thinks they are lethargic and over-confident, he will put a little sting into his words. If he feels they are already in the proper frame of mind, he will say very little.

Meanwhile the captain has returned and announced whether the team will kick off or receive. The coach makes any lineup adjustments that may be necessitated by this news, and the squad goes back on the field three minutes before the opening whistle.

*The Bench.*—By prearrangement, the substitute quarterbacks will be seated next to the head coach. Other groups will occupy designated places on the bench, with the third and fourth stringers farthest down the line. Assistant coaches, if available, will be assigned to each group.

On the other side of the head coach will be the assistant who is handling the telephone from the press box or "crow's nest," where the scout is situated. The ideal arrangement is: Scout and first assistant coach in the press box, one assistant on the telephone, one assistant with the linemen and one with the backs. Of course, many schools do not have such a staff available on game days, or any other day. The smaller staffs must do the best they can. The workable minimum is two coaches, the head man on the bench and his assistant preferably in the press box.

All substitutions should clear through the head coach to avoid confusion, but he needs some help. He will welcome suggestions from his assistants. The coaches in the press box, who have a better view of the field, can be especially helpful. They may give specific advice and suggestions to substitutes over the telephone, or talk directly with the men who have been pulled out of the game for rest or instructions.

Under the modern rules, there may be a certain amount of automatic substitution. For example, a player may be instructed to go in for a designated man whenever his team loses the ball. Until this order is countermanded, the player will substitute himself at the proper time without further word from the coach.

*Between Halves.*—As part of the 15-minute period between halves is consumed getting off and back on the field, only about 12 minutes are actually available. This time is precious and must be well budgeted.



The first thought is to get the players in restful positions and attend to minor injuries. They group themselves according to position: field generals, linemen, backs. During this time the coaches move among them, making suggestions and corrections. The head coach will concentrate on the quarterbacks, checking with them on plays that are working and not working and suggesting changes in strategy. If important revisions are to be made in the defensive or offensive tactics, the head coach will chart the new setup on the blackboard and discuss it briefly with the entire squad.

One of the assistants will keep time with a stopwatch and inform the head coach when 11 minutes have passed. The coach then addresses the entire group for a couple of minutes. Again there is no sure-fire formula for his remarks. More often than not, his tone will be encouraging rather than critical. Most boys react better to encouragement. Contrary to the popular conception, he rarely indulges in the proverbial pep talk. The boys are in the middle of a tough ball game. They want sound advice, not oratory.

The squad must be hustled out of the locker room and onto the field before the end of the 15-minute intermission, to avoid a penalty.

*After the Game.*—The coach usually will call the boys together for a very brief meeting immediately after the game. This meeting is important if some question has arisen about a player's mistake or an official's decision. If the game has been lost, the coach will tell the squad: "Let's not try to shift the responsibility. WE lost the ball game. There's another game next week—let's win it." If the game was won, he'll warn against overoptimism by saying something like this: "Nice going—but let's not celebrate yet. Now you have a greater responsibility than ever." He passes out oranges or apples, tells the boys to "relax a little—eat a bag of popcorn or a bunch of grapes—but don't have too big a night." A reasonable relaxation of the training routine is permissible on Saturday night.



That doesn't mean that the boy should break training. It means he should eat a good dinner, go to a show or a dance, leave early and get to bed before the wee small hours.

Sunday should be a real day of rest for the football player—his only holiday of the week. The coach will find it unwise to permit players to stay over after an out-of-town game. He should insist that all members of the squad return together; else he will find some wornout boys on his hands Monday afternoon.

*Friday Games.*—Many high schools and some colleges play their games Friday afternoon or night. These teams must telescope the usual five preparatory days into four. Monday is a day of offensive review and of initiation into the defenses to be used in the forthcoming game. Tuesday is the hard scrimmage day, instead of Wednesday. The work week then tapers off as described for a Saturday game.

*Night Games.*—If a night game is to be played at home, the players will go to classes as usual during the day. If it is away from home and the squad has an entire day on its hands, this is the suggested formula: late breakfast, morning chalk talk, late lunch, picture show in the afternoon, light supper three hours before game time. The first two meals should be liberal ones; the last one should be about the same as the pre-game lunch already recommended.

*Off-season.*—Football players should keep themselves in fair condition the year around. Handball is a fine off-season sport for footballers. Slow men can improve their speed by going out for track, running a lot and taking starts. Football players should not be discouraged from participating in other sports if they have the time and talent.

#### FOOTBALL INJURIES

*Precautions.*—Liberal use of tincture of benzoin compound or Tuff-Skin, a commercial medication, with any good foot powder will largely eliminate the blisters and sore feet that often plague football training camps. This treatment also is helpful in coun-

teracting athlete's foot. It should be applied every day for the first ten days and thereafter at least twice a week. Salt tablets are very helpful in preventing heat fag, stomach or leg cramps and other complications arising from a salt deficiency. Minor cuts and bruises should always be carefully treated to prevent infection.

*Ankle Sprain.*—This is the most common practice injury. The symptoms are: swelling, sharp pains when motion is attempted, dull aching pain when joint is at rest, tenderness on pressure over area of the torn ligament, protective muscular spasm. In case of doubt, the injury should be examined by the team physician or X-rayed for a possible break or dislocation.

Treatment: Carry the injured player to the training room. Apply crushed ice pack for 30 minutes. Paint the foot with benzoin. Spread analgesic balm on three 3x3 inches sterile dressings and apply one on either side of the ankle joint and the other on the Achilles tendon. Tape Gibney fashion (basket weave), using plenty of tape to make a strong, snug support for the injured ligaments and prevent further swelling of the joint. Instruct the player to elevate his foot on retiring and encourage him to walk with the aid of a cane.

Second day: Two or more physical therapy treatments may be given. Immerse the foot alternately in hot and cold water, five-minute periods, for at least six times; then administer moderate diathermy or infrared heat for 15 to 20 minutes. Follow with massage, being careful not to cause pain. Flex and extend the joint to prevent adhesions. Tape ankle as before.

Third and succeeding days: Repeat second-day treatment and add a 30-minute workout on a bicycle, stationary or otherwise. Continue until ankle is well. Even then, take no chances—tape it every day.

*Knee Injury.*—Apply ice pack immediately for 30 minutes; then consult your team physician as to procedure. If his examination shows the injury to be nothing more serious than a sprain or twist, give the player two or three days of complete rest. Meanwhile the daily treatment should include: 15 or 20

minutes of moderate diathermy or infrared heat, followed by light massage above and below the knee; overnight analgesic balm packs; bicycle riding; wearing of a substantial elastic knee support. Two points to remember are: (1) Don't get the injured player back in uniform too soon, and (2) never substitute a heavily constructed leather brace for a good knee.

*Shoulder Injury.*—In caring for a knocked-down shoulder, the object is to distribute pressure evenly *away* from the injured area. Thus the old method of applying a rubber doughnut or piece of sponge rubber directly over the affected area has been largely supplanted by the practice of taping a piece of sponge rubber (3x5 inches) in front of and in back of the injury and using *elastic* tape to build a safe and comfortable support. As for immediate treatment, a 30-minute ice pack is recommended followed by application of an analgesic balm pack which may be left on overnight. Moderate diathermy or infrared heat should then be given with massage and corrective exercises until the shoulder has healed.

*Head and Back Injuries.*—Be *overcautious* in dealing with this type of injury until the full extent has been determined by the team physician. The player should be covered with a blanket if the weather is cool or damp. The coach may examine the player's eyes to see if the pupils are of equal size, then ask the player to stick out his tongue and note whether it is protruded in a straight line. The injured man's limbs may be checked for weakness, numbness or limited motion.

*Never move the player from the site of the accident* until convinced that his injury is not serious. A stretcher should be available to carry doubtful cases to the training room.

In back injuries, players should be cautioned to report immediately any noticeable pains or difficulty in urinating. A second examination should be given in these cases, and probably a urinalysis. With any back injury, it is advisable to allow one or two days of inactivity followed by physical therapy treatments and corrective exercises.

*Drills*

ORGANIZED drills play an important part in the football training program; in fact, an afternoon's practice is little more or less than a series of individual, group and team drills.

The daily program usually follows a definite pattern: As the afternoon wears along, the work becomes more intense and the working units become larger. Typically the workout will wind up with 22 players involved in a scrimmage, either contact, semi-contact or dummy.

The sequence of drills almost always will be as follows: (1) warmup, (2) group, (3) team. The coach must make sure that players are sufficiently warmed up before they participate in rough work. The workout should always start with a brisk round of calisthenics. About eight of the warmup drills outlined below, or similar ones, should be sufficient. Late-comers to practice should do some running and a few warmup exercises on their own before joining their groups.

The other drills described in this chapter have been selected for their practical value. The aim should be to establish practice conditions that duplicate as nearly as possible the problems to be encountered in a game.

**WARMUP DRILLS**

*Lifting the Weights.*—From an erect stance the player goes down with a full knee bend, picks up an imaginary weight from

the ground and "raises" it slowly over the head, going up on toes, all muscles tensed, inhaling deeply. Repeat several times.

*Half Knee Bend.*—Hands on hips, exercise to a fast two-count.

*Full Knee Bend.*—Exercise to a slower two-count, bending knees fully, extending arms to side or in front.

*Four-count Exercise.*—Start from erect stance, hands on hips. (1) Flex knees, put hands on ground in front. (2) Extend legs to rear. (3) Resume position 1. (4) Resume starting position.

*Duck Waddle.*—Sit on the heels, hands on hips. Walk around in a circle, keeping tail down and feet about 18 inches apart.

*Russian Dance.*—From the duck waddle position, kick one foot and then the other to the front or side.

*Stationary Running.*—Assume sprinter's stance, both hands on the ground. Alternate the legs backward and forward beneath the body, keeping body still.

*Bicycle Ride.*—Starting position is flat on the back, legs raised. (1) Place hands under hips, feet well over head, toes nearly touching ground, and "ride the bicycle." (2) Brings legs down, stopping with heels a few inches off the ground. (3) Pat chest while swinging legs to the side in a scissoring motion. (4) Put heels on the ground and keep them there; place hands behind head. (5) Do several situps, raising trunk to erect position without taking heels off ground. (6) Clasp arms around knees and roll backward several times to loosen muscles around the spine.

*Hurdle Exercise.*—Sit on the ground with one leg extended straight to the front and the other folded at a 90-degree angle to the side, knee on ground. Exercise in two counts, attempting to touch the extended toe with each hand alternately. The chin should almost touch the advanced knee. Change position of legs and repeat.

*Pushups.*—Starting position is flat on the ground, face down.

(1) Do several pushups to a two-count. (2) Rock on the stomach, back arched and legs straight.

*Grass Drill.*—Starting position is erect. (1) Run in place, lifting knees well up. (2) At voice signal "Forward," fall to the ground, face down. (3) The commands "Right," "Left," "Backward," "Forward," are alternated and obeyed in rapid-fire order, broken by the occasional command "On your feet." Note: Each time the men get to their feet, they resume running in place. The command "Backward" means to flop over on the back and reverse the body so that the head will be pointing in the opposite direction from the "Forward" position.

*Side-straddle.*—This is a good drill to wind up the warmup. From an erect position, hands on hips, the exercise is in two counts: (1) jumping to a spread stance, at the same time slapping hands together over head, arms extended; (2) resuming starting position. Instead of counting cadence, the men may "spell"—for example: "Beat—those—Cougars!" (repeated three times) and then "T—E—X—A—S—Texas—Texas—Texas!" Then the entire squad makes a short circle of the field and gathers in the middle for assignments to group work.

#### LINEMEN'S DRILLS (WARMUP)

*Pull Out and Check Block.*—Players line up and count off by threes to start this series of exercises, then assume offensive stances. (1) At a signal, each No. 1 pulls out to the right and cuts up field through the gap left by the No. 1 to his right. The No. 2 and No. 3 players check-block in the line. (2) The No. 2 and then the No. 3 men perform the same maneuver. (3) The routine is repeated to the left.

*Protecting Passer.*—With players lined up as above, at a signal the No. 1 men drop out and protect the passer against imaginary rushers from the left (or right). The others check block in the line, then take their turns dropping out.

*Cutting off Line-backer.*—With the same lineup, the No. 1



players charge forward, quickly coil and turn to cut off imaginary line-backer coming across to meet the play. Others check block, then take their turns.

*Mouse-trap Drill.*—Linemen take defensive stances. At command they charge imaginary opponent, stop on hands and feet as if expecting a trap block, duck low so as not to be an easy target and quickly retreat to fill the hole. (This drill develops quickness and agility.)

*Spinning Out.*—Linemen charge hard, then react as if they were being taken to one side or the other. They spin out of the block and back into the hole, being reminded to move laterally or backward so as to get in front of the ball-carrier.

*Rodeo.*—All linemen form a ring and each in turn, called out by the coach, dashes into the center of the ring on his hands and feet, moves forward, backward, and sidewise, spins, rolls over and otherwise demonstrates the techniques of defensive line play. This drill develops form and agility and finishes warming up the players' muscles. It also shows the coach which men can handle themselves best.

Note: The above drills may be used against "live bait."

#### LINEMEN'S DRILLS (CONTACT)

*Running Shoulder Block.*—This drill trains guards and tackles in pulling out to block ends and line-backers or to trap opponents. (1) The guards, left and right, line up in two rows, single file, with one man space between the two files. The tackles divide, left and right, and assume the defensive end positions in single file. (2) Coach, standing behind the tackles, gives hand signal for guards to block in or out. (3) On a starting signal the lead guards pull, left file to the left and right file to the right, and block on the lead tackles. (4) These four men drop to the ends of their respective lines and the next set of guards executes the blocks on the next set of tackles, and so on. (5) On the second round, the left guards line up in the right file



and pull to the right, the right guards to the left. (6) The guards take the defensive end positions, the tackles their respective offensive positions and the drill is repeated in its entirety. (7) The tackles take the defensive line-backers' positions and guards pull out and block as before. (8) The guards become the defensive line-backers and the tackles pull and block. (Driving straight through for the line-backer may be practiced by eliminating the pulling.)

Note: In this drill the coach checks stance, speed in pulling and getting to opponent, position of the head and body on contact and power on contact. He instructs the pulling linemen that contact on a running shoulder block should be obtained a little higher than on a line block, and that even higher contact is desirable in blocking line-backers.

*Defensive Guard Drill.*—Guard works against four blockers: No. 1 and No. 2 are positioned directly in front of him as on the line of scrimmage; No. 3 one yard back of the line and about three yards to the right of No. 1; No. 4 also one yard back and about three yards to the left of No. 2. (This setup simulates the problem of the guard facing two blockers on the line of scrimmage, with a wingback and a blocking back or pulling lineman in position to trap him.) Coach stands behind guard to give hand signals for the following:

(1) No. 1 and No. 2 double team on the guard, trying to turn him right or left or take him straight back.

(2) Either 1 or 2 blocks individually (check block) on the guard and the other pulls out right or left.

(3) No. 1 and No. 2 pass up the defensive guard; as he charges through without opposition, he is trap-blocked by No. 3 or No. 4.

*Defensive Tackle Drill.*—Tackle works against three blockers: No. 1 is a yard back of an imaginary line of scrimmage and off his outside shoulder; No. 2 is on the line of scrimmage and off his inside shoulder; No. 3 is a yard back and about three yards to the tackle's inside. (This setup simulates the problem

of a tackle playing off the outside shoulder of an offensive end, with the wingback in front of him and another back or pulling lineman in position to trap him.) Coach stands behind tackle and gives hand signals for the following:

(1) No. 1 and No. 2 blockers double team, blocking tackle to right or left.

(2) No. 2 blocks the tackle and No. 1 swings outside.

(3) No. 1 blocks the tackle in and No. 2 goes down for a pass.

(4) No. 1 and No. 2 fake blocks and go out for passes; as the tackle charges through, No. 3 trap-blocks him.

Note: Tackle is reminded that he must protect his territory at all times.

*Contest.*—Well-padded posts set in the ground about five feet apart (or dummies held in that position by other players) mark the lateral limits of the contest area, and a straight line between the posts is considered the line of scrimmage. One offensive and one defensive player take their positions on the line, squared off against each other. The coach places his hand low on one of the posts, so each player can see it, and snaps it away to simulate the center pass. The offensive player attempts to block the defensive player right or left; the defensive player attempts to protect his territory (the space between the posts).

Note: After the first pair has contested to the best-two-out-of-three "falls," another pair takes over. The next time around, the offensive and defensive assignments are reversed.

## TACKLING

*Form.*—Group is divided equally and the two units line up facing each other about five yards apart. Tackling is one-on-one at one-fourth speed. The tackler makes contact with his shoulder, lifts the opponent, carries him about five yards and sets him down on his feet. This drill develops leg lift and drive after tackling, eliminates going to the knees after tackling, con-

ditions the shoulder to shock and can be used every day without danger of injury. The man being tackled should use just enough evasiveness to make the tackler keep good base of feet with head up and alert for cutting and shifting of the "ball-carrier."

*Line-backers and Halfbacks.*—Centers, fullbacks, left and right halfbacks are grouped, single file, in their respective defensive positions. Ball-carriers line up single file behind the offensive center. The lead men in each unit take part in the play. The defensive men are instructed to perform as they would in a game: line-backers preventing the ball-carrier from cutting back, halfbacks protecting their outside and coming up fast. The ball is snapped to the lead ball-carrier, who takes off on a course of his own choosing. After he has been tackled, these men drop back to the end of their respective files and the next set performs until all have had several chances.

#### DRILLS FOR BALL-CARRIERS

*Running Form.*—The backs line up single file and run down the field, straddling an imaginary plank about 18 inches wide. This drill develops powerful running form with a good base from which the ball-carrier can change direction quickly. It is especially good for natural straight-line runners.

*Holding the Ball.*—The backs line up single file and run a gauntlet consisting of two single-file lines of defensive players. As each back runs through, these defensive players attempt to take the ball away from him. They are not to hold the ball-carrier or step in front of him.

*Spin Drill (for Fullbacks).*—Two dummies or inactive players are stationed about five feet apart on the line of scrimmage. An active line-backer plays between them and four or five yards back. The ball-carrier drives through the "hole" between the dummies, lowers his shoulders, contacts line-backer with his forearm and attempts to spin away to either side.

Note: This drill may be used with a blocker going through the hole ahead of the ball-carrier. It is excellent training for line-backers as well as for line-plunging backs.

#### PASSING DRILLS

*Forward-backward.*—Receivers are divided into two equal groups, one lining up single file at the left end position and the other at the right. Passers are in single file behind the center. First the lead man of the right file goes down for a pass, executing stunts of his choice. The second man in the same file trails him for a lateral. Then the first two men in the left file perform similarly, and so on. Receivers alternate between the right and left files and between receiving forwards and laterals. Passers take four throws before moving to the rear of their file.

*Playing the Ball.*—Line-backers, halfbacks and safety man take their normal defensive positions. The defensive quarterback calls a defense. At a voice signal from the coach, meaning that a pass is indicated, they fade quickly into their pass-defense zones. The passer then throws the ball to any point in the secondary he chooses. All defenders take part in the "play," those nearest the ball going for it and the others quickly forming interference for the return of an intercepted pass.

Note: The ball is always played after it is passed, no matter what the type of pass defense. This drill helps the secondary to keep this principle in mind.

*Offense and Defense.*—A combination drill with the line-backers and halfbacks on defense and the ends on offense. The two groups should wear different colored jerseys, or the defense may slip sleeveless colored shirts over their practice jerseys. Rightside line-backers and right halfbacks form one single-file unit on defense, leftside line-backers and left halfbacks the other. Left and right ends line up single file in their respective offensive positions, with lead men of defensive files opposite them and about five yards back. The lead receiver will indicate

by hand signal to passer what maneuver he will make. The lead defender in front of him will attempt to cover him. These men then will go to the end of their respective files. Passers will rotate, throwing alternately to left and right.

*Spotting the Zone.*—To teach quarterbacks which pass patterns are most effective against specific defensive arrangements, jerseys or other markers may be placed on the ground to spot the positions of defensive players and a passing drill conducted with a skeleton unit composed of center, ends and backs. For example, against a 6-2-2-1 defense the quarterback will be instructed to send receivers into the following zones: right or left flat, in the middle in front of the safety, deep behind the halfbacks. The markers on the ground will serve to define these zones.

*Forward Pass Scrimmage.*—Every player is active but there is no tackling. Defensive team will tag passer or receiver. Offensive team calls only pass plays. It keeps the ball until it is lost on downs or intercepted, or a touchdown has been scored.

Note: A well-balanced setup for this type of scrimmage would be: Fourth-team line rushing passer; first-string line protecting passer; first-string backfield on defense.

*Round Robin.*—In this competitive passing scrimmage, two teams are on offense and one on defense. A change will be made every ten minutes until each team has had an equal number of offensive and defensive opportunities. The two teams on offense run plays alternately. Defensive men tag instead of tackling; defensive linemen stop after crossing the line of scrimmage and protect their territory. Coach will call "time" on the passer if he holds the ball too long. A run of five yards before the ball-carrier is tagged counts as a completed pass. (This option keeps the defense alerted for a fake-pass-and-run.) A manager keeps tab on the passes completed by and against each unit and at the close of the drill announces the offensive and defensive winners.

## PUNTING

*Combination Drill.*—This drill brings in punting, covering punts, receiving punts, passing and receiving passes. The kickers line up single file, the lead man nine or ten yards behind the center. Ends line up in single file, right and left, in their customary punt-formation positions. Safety men are downfield and will alternate in receiving punts. Ends go down under the punt; then they wait until another punt has been received and break back up the field to take a forward pass from the punt receiver.

Note: Defensive ends may be placed across the line of scrimmage to rush the punter. If so, only one at a time should rush (to avoid collisions) and he should start from about five yards back of the line of scrimmage (as the punter has no protective blockers).

## PLACE-KICKING

*Time Element.*—A skeleton unit composed of center, holder, placekicker and two rushers executes this drill. Rushers start from five yards back of the defensive end positions at the snap of the ball. Only one should rush at a time. This drill accustoms the holder and kicker to pressure and tends to speed up their work.

## TEAM SCRIMMAGE

To conduct a contact scrimmage and yet avoid using up his men, a coach may (1) designate certain defensive men to be active on each play or (2) make one side of the defense active at a time.

The procedure under (1) would be for the coach to call out, for example, "Ends active." The quarterback would then call



a play inside or outside end. Or the order might be, "Secondary active." The quarterback would call a pass play.

If the coach calls, "Right side active," the play will be directed to that side.

The final step in contact scrimmage, of course, is to make all members of both teams active under game conditions.



*Watching Football*

FOOTBALL is a game that appeals to the average American whether he knows any of the finer points or not. The rugged contact on the field, the infectious enthusiasm of the crowd, the thrilling sight of a long run, pass or kick, and the tense uncertainty of the final minutes in a close game are elements that the uninitiated can appreciate. In other words, the fan does not need to be a football expert to enjoy a football game.

At the same time, the more he knows about the game, the more he will enjoy it. He does not need to overburden himself with details; he will not worry much whether the wingback blocked the end with a reverse shoulder block or a sideswipe, or whether the passer puts his thumb or his fingers across the laces. These purely technical matters are of little interest to the public.

Mr. Average Fan has had a lot of advice from "experts" on how to watch a football game. He has been chided by his better informed friends for always watching the ball. "You miss the best part of the game that way," they remark condescendingly. We are not sure the experts are right about that. A fellow can get an excellent idea of what goes on in a football game by following the ball. After all, everything in this book, and everything in football for that matter, boils down to the efforts of one team to advance the ball and the efforts of the other to prevent its advance.

## BETWEEN PLAYS

Even so, much happens on a football afternoon besides the movement of the ball. Most plays actually last only a few seconds; yet during the game the two teams will average running only a little more than one play a minute. The fan who pays two or three dollars for a seat and merely watches the ball isn't getting his money's worth! With a modicum of effort, he can learn to fill in that vacuum between plays so as to add considerably to his enjoyment of the game.

Almost all fans have a working knowledge of football rudiments: the nomenclature of the various positions and techniques, and a smattering of the rules—that neither team may cross the line of scrimmage before the ball is snapped, that the offensive team has four downs in which to make 10 yards, that only the players at the ends of the line and in the backfield are eligible to receive forward passes, and that offensive players are not allowed to use their hands (hold) or block opponents from the rear (clip), and so on.

A spectator has the same opportunity as the quarterback to check the tactical situation—down, yards to go for a first down, position on the field, time to play, score. The scoreboard, the public address system and the fan's own eyes will provide this information.

As the offensive team comes out of the huddle and up to the ball, the fan may observe the player arrangement or *formation*. Brief study of the formation charts in Chapter VII will enable him readily to identify the formation.

Then he may glance across the line and observe the deployment of the defense—whether 6-2-2-1, 5-3-2-1 or some other arrangement.

After awhile he may even indulge in a little first-guessing as to what the quarterback is going to do—and detect, from the defensive formation, whether the defensive team is playing for a run into the line, a sweep, a pass or a kick. Because he has ob-

served the offensive and defensive deployments before the play started, he will have a better idea as to why the play worked or didn't work, and who was responsible.

Some fans will have the time and inclination to venture further into the technical phases of football. For them, as well as for coaches and players, this manual was written.

### SUGGESTIONS

We have defended the spectator who likes to follow the ball and have admitted that he is going to see a lot of football. There are times, however, when he can get a new and interesting slant by taking his eye off the ball and still not run the risk of missing anything vital. Here are a few suggestions:

1. As a back takes the ball and fades to throw a forward pass, switch over and watch the ends and wingbacks going down the field. Observe the pattern of their deployment; watch them fake, wheel, cut or pivot in an effort to shake the defending backs. You'll still see the catch, if one is made, or at least have the thrill of turning to your friends and remarking wisely: "Smith was wide open that time, but Jones didn't see him."

2. On a punt, take your eye off the kicker and watch the efforts of defensive linemen to break through the protecting ring and block the punt. If one succeeds, you'll have the satisfaction of knowing who it was and how he got there. Next time, watch the ends and other linemen going down to cover the kick, the actions of the safety man preparing to receive it and the movements of his blockers forming interference for a runback.

3. Movements of the offensive guards are interesting to watch and afford the surest tipoff on the play. You can see them block straight ahead, drop out to protect the passer, pull out to lead a play or cut across to throw a trap block—and still have time to pick up the ball-carrier before he reaches the point of attack.

4. Concentrate on the defensive linemen occasionally. Observe their charge and how they protect their territory. See who gets up last from a pileup. Watch the line-backers smack through to make tackles unmolested because their linemen have eliminated the interference.

5. When an offensive back goes into motion, note who covers him and what adjustments are made by the other defensive players. If the defense ignores him, turn to your friends and predict: "Brown is going to catch a pass for a long gain, first thing you know." (If the quarterback is as observant as you, Brown will.)

6. Develop the habit of seeing a bigger area than the square yard occupied by the ball-carrier, passer or kicker. Try to see the whole play, not just a portion of it.

#### THE RULES

The fan who does not care to dip even casually into technical football ought, at least, to know a bit about the rules in order to understand what is going on. The National Collegiate Athletic Association's Official Football Rule Book is an 80-page document. Few fans have read it from cover to cover, and some coaches haven't. The coaches should, but the average fan doesn't need to. He will have to take the referee's word on the more obscure and involved points.

The Rule Book lists more than 70 penalties, ranging from loss of a down to forfeiture of the game. Of all these infractions, about a dozen will account for perhaps 90 per cent of the penalties stepped off by the referee during the average football game.

If the fan is familiar with the following fouls and penalties and the referee's signal for each, he can keep up with the ball game.

## FIVE-YARD PENALTIES

*Offside*.—Signal: Hands on hips, facing offending team.

*Backfield in Motion*.—Signal: Horizontal arc with either hand.

*Delay of Game or Too Many Time-outs*.—Signal: Arms folded.

*Defensive Holding* (also an automatic first down).—Signal: Grasping wrist.

*Running into Kicker*.—Signal: Military salute, followed by swing of referee's leg. (Automatic first down.)

## FIFTEEN-YARD PENALTIES

*Holding* (illegal use of hands on offense).—Signal: Grasping wrist.

*Clipping*.—Signal: Military salute, followed by referee's striking back of his knee with hand.

*Roughing the Kicker*.—Signal: Same as for running into the kicker. (The difference in these infractions is merely one of degree.)

*Unnecessary Roughness*.—Signal: Military salute.

*Intentional Grounding of Pass*.—Signal: Downward throwing motion.

## OTHER PENALTIES AND SIGNALS

Another frequent penalty that does not fit into any definite yardage classification is that for *interference on a forward pass*. That is, it fits the fifteen-yard measure only if it is assessed against the *passing team*. This infraction is most often called against the defending team, and in that case the ball goes to the passing team at the spot of the foul, first down. Thus the penalty might be one, ten, or 50 yards. If the interference on part of the defensive team occurred in its end zone, it is a first down for the offensive team on the one-yard line. The referee's sig-

nal is a pushing motion from the shoulders with hands vertical.

Other frequently used signals are:

Sifting hands in horizontal plane—penalty refused, incomplete pass, missed goal, etc.

Both arms extended over head—a score (touchdown, field goal or extra point). Bringing palms together—safety.

Sifting hands over head—time out.

The referee *enforces* all penalties, but the umpire, head linesman and field judge *call* their share of them. Each official now carries a large red handkerchief which he drops whenever he observes a foul; the umpire and linesman also blow horns, but *only the referee's whistle kills the ball*. Often a play continues long after the horns have blown and red flags have been scattered over the field. The offended team then has its choice of the play or the penalty.

#### THE SAFETY AND THE TOUCHBACK

The point in the rules that seems to bother the most fans is the distinction between a *touchback* and a *safety*. It is simply a case of *which team is responsible for putting the ball back of the goal line*.

When a safety or touchback occurs, the ball will be in possession of the defending team or the ball will have gone out of bounds back of the goal line.

In the case of the safety, the defending team is responsible through impetus, foul or error, and the attacking team is credited with two points.

In the case of a touchback, the attacking team is responsible through impetus, foul or error, and the defending team is in no way responsible; it is given the ball on the 20-yard line, first and ten.

In the case of a touchdown, the ball is legally in possession of the attacking team on the goal line or in the end zone of the opponents.

## PERSONAL INTEREST

After all is said and done, the average fan likes football best when he is personally interested in the schools and players involved. This interest may stem from personal acquaintance with coaches and players, from his ties with one of the contesting schools or merely from reading the sports pages. He will enjoy the game more if the players are names and personalities to him, rather than mere numbers. He will want to reach the stadium early, buy a program and study the rosters and thumbnail sketches of both teams. He may commit to memory the numbers of the starting lineups; then he will not have to depend on the public address system for their identification.

Most teams now follow a numbering system that aids in the quick identification of players by positions. The N.C.A.A. Rules Committee strongly recommends that numbers be assigned as follows:

Ends—80 to 89.

Tackles—70 to 79.

Guards—60 to 69.

Centers—50 to 59.

Backs—10 to 49.

As a further refinement, leftside linemen are usually given the odd numbers, those on the right the even numbers. In the backfield this further grouping is popular: wingbacks or right halfbacks, 10 to 19; quarterbacks, 20 to 29; fullbacks, 30 to 39; tailbacks or left halfbacks, 40 to 49.

The fan should not be too unhappy if his seat is not on the 50-yard line. The advantages of a midfield seat are about as much *social* as *practical*. Some football students actually prefer to sit at the end of the field, where they can observe the game as the players themselves see it—lengthwise of the gridiron. Each section of the stadium provides a slightly different slant on the field, and there are few seats in modern stadia from which a good view of the game cannot be obtained.



*The Coach off the Field*

AS HAS ALREADY been suggested several times, a football coach's work isn't confined to the field. He has many obligations other than that of turning out a football team. He has off-the-field responsibilities to his players and assistants, fellow coaches, his school, the alumni, the press and the general public. He is likely to be a prominent figure in his community, which makes it most important that he live up to his responsibilities as a citizen. He has an obligation to himself to live cleanly, deal fairly, work faithfully at his job, uphold the traditions of clean, hard play and good sportsmanship—and keep his self-respect. He has a tremendous obligation to the game itself.

Sometimes a coach who is highly capable on the field will fail because he falls short in off-the-field requirements.

## RELATIONS WITH PLAYERS

A coach must retain the respect of his players off the field if he is to have it on the field. Respect must come before personal liking. The coach is not trying to win a popularity contest; he is trying to win football games. But at the same time he is trying to build boys into men, and he must never forget this more

important responsibility. If he expects the boys never to let him down, he must never let them down.

When it is necessary to criticize a player, the coach should do it in the dressing room or in the office with the door closed. A boy will accept fair and constructive criticism when it is delivered in private or with his own group, but he will resent being dressed down in the presence of outsiders.

The coach's position should be that of a somewhat stern but understanding father. He must, by all means, preclude the familiarity that breeds contempt, and yet he must not be unapproachable. His office door is always open to the boy with a problem. He will advise and assist such a boy as if he were his own son. No man should choose coaching as a profession unless he likes boys and enjoys working with them. At the same time, for the good of all concerned, he cannot afford to tolerate disloyalty, disrespect or any attempt to take advantage of his natural ambition to have a good football team.

The coach should study his players as individuals and make appropriate allowances for differences in temperament, but not to the extent of violating this cardinal rule: No favorites, and no special privileges.

The time to start establishing coach-player relations on a basis of mutual respect and confidence is the first day on the job. If this policy is religiously observed, very likely the coach will find it eventually working out this way: The boys of strong character and topflight ability will like him; the shirkers and cry-babies will not. That is as it should be.

#### RELATIONS WITH OTHER COACHES

On the field the head coach runs the show; off the field, as far as his assistants are concerned, he is one of the boys. Again, the basis of friendly, enjoyable off-field relationships is mutual respect and confidence.

With coaches of other sports in the same school, the football

coach should be most cooperative. He will try to understand their viewpoints and help them with their problems. He will not attempt to dictate policies in other sports merely because football makes more money than track, baseball or swimming. Instead his attitude should be one of encouraging a full and representative sports program.

There is no good reason why a football coach should not maintain close and friendly relations with the coaches of other schools, including his opponents. Except for a few afternoons each fall—during which they are enemies to the figurative death—coaches are as much a mutual interest group as lawyers, doctors, bankers or cranberry merchants. They should stand together for the advancement of their sport and their profession, and they should band together against the occasional unethical operator whose activities are not for the best interests of football.

District, statewide and national organizations of coaches are generally to be encouraged. Their meetings provide forums for the interchange of ideas and the promotion of better relations. They develop comradeship and good will, which in turn produce higher and better ethics. There is nothing like personal contact to clear up any misunderstandings that might exist among individual coaches.

Older and more experienced coaches should stand ready to help young coaches in every ethical way.

#### OFFICIALS

It is highly desirable for officials to be assigned by some central body, preferably the conference or league office. In some areas the officials themselves have taken over this function. Whatever the method, officials should be selected on other than a personal basis. Coaches should encourage efforts of officials' associations to raise their own standards and secure uniform rule interpretations.

When selection of officials for a game is left up to the two coaches, this is a fair method: Each coach ranks a number of acceptable officials, the lists are compared and the four officials hired whose names are highest on both lists and who are available on the date in question. To save embarrassment, there should always be a definite advance agreement on officials' fees.

A separate dressing room should be provided for the officials. It is best for the coach not to talk with the officials before the game, unless he has some definite question or problem to take up. The same advice applies between halves.

Football officials do not have an easy job. It has been estimated that the four of them make approximately 500 decisions in a game. No coach is pleased when a close one goes against his team, but he will find it an excellent habit to accept the decision and keep his mouth shut until he has cooled off. Then he can express his feelings much more dispassionately, if not more forcefully, by letter to the central office or to the official himself. In most cases he will find that the whole matter were better forgotten.

This advice applies to decisions in which the official's judgment was the principal factor. If during the game the coach feels that a rule is being misinterpreted to his team's disadvantage, he should immediately ask for permission to speak with the referee. It is best for the opposing coach to be brought into the conference. The protesting coach should state his case briefly and accept the referee's decision gracefully. Under no circumstances should he go on the field without permission.

#### THE SCHOOL

A coach must maintain cordial and cooperative relations with the school administration and with the faculty. He is not going to stay long or do well on any job unless he recognizes the authority of these groups in their respective fields. At the same time, he will respectfully insist that they show him the same

consideration. The school board, the athletic council and the president or superintendent set the policies; the faculty teaches; the football coach coaches football. This clear division of prerogatives must be maintained, and the coach must make his share of the adjustments.

His attitude toward the administration should be straightforward, respectful and unobtrusively independent. He will not attempt to run the school, and he will expect the school to let him handle the football team. Even if his self-respect would permit such a practice, no coach could expect to benefit himself long by kowtowing to arrogant or officious administrative superiors. The thing to do is to look for another job. On the other hand, he must not overestimate his own authority or resent proper and well intentioned suggestions or criticisms from above.

The coach must always remember that his program is only one phase of the school's program, and a subsidiary phase at that. The classroom still outranks the stadium. The coach who recognizes this fact will have little trouble getting along with the faculty. He will insist that his players keep up their classroom work. If a boy is falling behind, the coach may go to his teachers and ascertain what needs to be done to bring his grades up. Usually the faculty members will be cooperative when they learn that the coach is sincerely interested in the boy's scholastic progress and has the proper respect for their viewpoint. After all, the coach is a fellow teacher and often a member of the faculty himself.

The coach should take part in the social and semi-official activities of the school, but not to the extent of aligning himself with any particular clique or group. He has enough problems without involving himself in any campus or community feuds.

## BOOSTERS

Every institution has a group of ex-students and other well-wishers whose intense interest in its athletic fortunes makes them

an important factor in the program. We are speaking now of the redhot fans, the boosters who want to do something more than watch the football game. These people are sincerely and deeply interested in the team. They want the team to win, and they want to help the coach produce a winning team. Their loyalty to the team is unquestioned, but at the same time they are likely to be its keenest critics. All experienced coaches have learned that the "Boosters' Victory March" can change overnight into the "Anvil Chorus."

Nevertheless, this group provides a fountainhead of enthusiasm and energy that can be one of the coach's finest assets if properly directed. The tendency is to want to do too much. The coach must keep a firm checkrein on the Boosters' Clubs. He will do his best to keep the picture from getting out of focus. It is a fatal mistake to allow a school athletic program to get away from the school. It is not right and it will not work.

The Boosters' Clubs can help the coach in ways too familiar and too numerous to mention here. In turn, the coach should encourage their interest, speak at their banquets when invited, send game movies to be shown at their meetings and in general make them feel that they have a real part in the program. He will show his gratitude for their loyalty and assistance. At the same time, he will let them know in a nice way that their activities must fit into the school program—not vice versa.

Very few of these ardent supporters will ever try to take advantage of their inside position. These few must be put in their places, politely but firmly. The coach must draw a line between helpfulness and interference. If feelings are ruffled, that cannot be helped. The coach who starts playing ball with domineering outsiders is on his way out.

#### PRESS AND RADIO

The public forms its impression of a football coach largely from the sports pages and the sportscasts. It is no sign of



vanity, then, if a coach does all he reasonably can to assure himself of a good press. He does this not by fawning upon the sports writers, but by treating them man-to-man as colleagues in the broad field of athletic endeavor. He respects their positions and hopes they will respect his. Almost invariably they will.

A coach who deals frankly and fairly with the press and radio people will gain by it over a period of years. Rare violations of confidence or stab-in-the-back criticisms will be far outnumbered by the good breaks.

One of the first things a young coach must learn is to take criticism. His first reaction is to punch the critic in the nose or write him a hot letter. When dealing with sports writers, either course would be a mistake. If the writer is merely expressing a personal opinion or prejudice, the coach takes it for what it is worth and says nothing. If the criticism was based on misinformation or contains garbled facts, he will seize upon the first opportunity to have a friendly chat with the critic and set the record straight.

It is not smart business for a coach to indulge in feuds with sports writers and broadcasters. They have too much of an edge in circulation.

Aside from all these considerations is the personal satisfaction and pleasure that comes from cordial relations with the men who cover your games and practice sessions. Often they become almost as interested in the team as the coach is, and their comments and suggestions often are most helpful.

That press and radio publicity has contributed immensely to the popularity and financial success of school and college sports programs cannot be doubted. In return the institution should provide comfortable working facilities at the stadium, handle reasonable requests for complimentary tickets and in general make it easy for the boys who are covering the game. These provisions should include:

1. A publicity man, part- or preferably full-time, to furnish



printed information about the team during the week and at the game, and to answer special requests and questions.

2. A modern press box, as spacious and comfortable as the school can afford, with at least one separate radio booth.

3. Careful handling of press box tickets and adequate policing of the box to protect the working press against unwarranted intrusions by outsiders.

4. A small public-address system in the box and a qualified spotter to make necessary identifications and announcements; competent helpers to keep statistics and distribute them after the game; plenty of programs; soft drinks or coffee and sandwiches at halftime.

The coach should always be easy for sports writers to find, and he should try to give them a story. It is better to say too little than too much, but at least he can show them the courtesy of answering their questions even if the answer sometimes must be cautious or off the record. He should make himself available after the game, win or lose, for comments (but he should guard against making any rash or sweeping statements before the heat of battle has cooled).

Never, under any circumstances, should the coach make a public criticism of individual players or his assistants, and it should take extreme circumstances to make him say anything derogatory of opposing coaches or the officials. The head coach gets a lot of credit when the sailing is smooth; when it is stormy, he has to take most of the blame. (The general rule, unfortunately, is: Too much credit when the team wins; too much censure when it loses.)

Pictures are an important item in the publicity program. The athletic department should be prepared to furnish photographs of coaches and players on request, and press photographers must be given an opportunity to take action pictures of individuals on the practice field. As a time-saving device all the way around, an entire afternoon should be set aside for the photographers early in the fall training season. Sideline passes

for regular games should be limited to accredited representatives of newspapers and feature syndicates.

#### THE PUBLIC

To the public at large, the football coach is a name in the newspaper and a faraway figure on the bench; the coach sees the public as a blur of faces in the grandstand. Yet he owes a direct and considerable obligation to these anonymous spectators. For one thing, their patronage pays his salary and keeps the football program going.

They have a right to expect in return clean, safe accommodations, as comfortable as circumstances will permit. They have a right to see a hard-played football game. One team may be outmatched, but it shouldn't be outfought. Above all, they have a right to see an honest football game. That means honesty of effort as well as moral honesty. The coach is obligated to field a team that will realize its maximum possibilities, whether they be great or small. And, of course, every coach holds a sacred trust to stamp out crookedness, bribery and commercial exploitation wherever they may be found. For "the fix" to come into American football would be more than a disgrace—it would be a national tragedy.

For the convenience of the coaches and the team, more than for the protection of secrets, most in-season workouts will be conducted behind closed gates. (As already stressed, it is embarrassing to the players to be corrected or criticized in the presence of outsiders.) An exception may be made if stands are available on the practice field, provided the spectators can be kept in the stands. The individual coach will have to work out his own policy, but whatever it is, he should show no favoritism to any outside group. He should remember that the fans are interested in getting a look at the team, especially during spring and early fall training, and for their benefit he should arrange to play several intrasquad games in the stadium. It is

well to put the players in numbered jerseys and have the public address system working for these scrimmages.

Services that should be provided during the regular season include:

1. An equitable and convenient method of distributing tickets.
2. Adequate policing of the stands and grounds; plenty of ushers, programs, cushions, soft drinks and other concessionaire's items for sale at reasonable prices.
3. A public address system, capably manned, to identify players and check the position of the ball for fans who are not able to see the sideline markers and yardsticks. (The system may be used for legitimate emergency announcements. The policy should be, however, to say no more than is absolutely necessary over the loud speaker, for any reason. The announcer should keep his comments brief and to the point; he is giving out information, not opinions or "color.")
4. Plenty of entrance gates and exits.
5. All-weather parking lots inside the stadium grounds or close by, if space allows.

#### THE COACH AND THE GAME

Football coaching has come to be recognized as a worthy profession whose practitioners make a real contribution to the American way of life. The trend is toward stabilization—longer tenure, less drastic emphasis on the won-and-lost record, often full faculty status. The coach's job may still be less secure (and more remunerative) than that of the chemistry teacher, but he no longer starts packing his bags when his team loses the championship.

Coaches have proved and must continue to prove their right to professional status by upholding and improving their professional and ethical standards. Conditions have changed in the last 20 years, but basic principles have not. In 1928 we were

privileged to present to the American Football Coaches Association the report of its stabilizing committee. It is interesting to note that most of those observations still apply. From the report we quote:

"No profession or calling, either in business or in education, can be stable unless its members have the same, or at least similar, purposes and ideals. These purposes and ideals, crystallized and defined in rules of conduct, are the signs or trademarks by which the profession wishes to be known to the public. Though, of course, this trademark like commercial trademarks has value only according to the faithfulness with which the profession lives up to it . . .

"Of inestimable value to the profession of football coaching, to all athletic coaching of educational intent so far as that goes, is a rigorous adherence to a code of ethics that shall mark those men engaged in it. In this, it is not meant to suggest that such a code does not exist. It does. The fact that a growing number of men of high ideals are turning toward coaching every year, that the training of men in football has definitely come to be known as a profession, is indicative of a permanency and a respect from the public that only a calling of high ideals could enjoy.

"The first thing to consider, as we seek ways and means of stabilizing the profession of football coaching, is the claim which this calling has to be regarded as socially useful. Why, from the point of view of one who has human welfare at heart, should there be football coaches? Why should there be football at all? The answer must be that football coaching is, after all, but one form of physical training, and physical training in its highest and best sense is educational. It is for this reason, and not that students may cheer themselves hoarse on Thanksgiving Day, that football is a phase of college life.

"This being the case, football coaching should have a definite place in the curriculum of a college. In all colleges where it has a part, this work should be departmentalized, either as a separate

unit or as a part of the general program of physical training . . . The coach should enter upon his work as a teacher rather than as one employed to win football games.

"In such a role, a coach should make his connection with a college direct with officials of the institution rather than with an alumni committee or group of business men who are interested in promoting football at the school. His allegiance should be to the college direct rather than to any special group or committee.

"As a member of the college faculty in physical training, his prestige is enhanced, his position more secure, his responsibilities undivided. He is in better position to weather the years that are lean in victories when the hue and cry of the disappointed rise about his ears to plague him and, in many instances, to drive him away altogether. No coach can give his best to his work when he knows that a championship team is the only standard of success by which he is measured, when he is subject to the petty dictation of a semi-official group, when he knows that even though the material with which he has to work is not of championship caliber, he must make it so or have the hounds baying at his heels . . .

"In making a connection with an institution, the coach should be assured of a reasonably long contract . . . A coach must, of course, have confidence in his ability, but if he cannot command respect in defeat, he cannot hope for a permanent place in the ranks of those whose role should be to teach honor as well as to strive for victory . . .

"But in general it may be said that the coaches themselves must make a consistent effort to convince the public that their aim is honestly educational, and not primarily a desire to win championships and occupy space on the sports pages. If our aim is *not* primarily educational, then it is both unavailing and hypocritical for us to pose as members of a dignified profession.

"If football is to take its place by the side of the other departments, it must exist primarily to develop an intelligent use

of muscle, to regulate the exercise of determination and fight, to teach self-control and sportsmanship, and those fine qualities that are the mark of a flaming and courageous heart. The gridiron, in this scheme of things, is but the laboratory where the theories and the instruction of the teacher are put to the test . . .

"It is advisable that members of this association try to avoid, or if they already exist, to shake off all unofficial influence over their work. It is of utmost importance that the amateur standing and ideals of the game be kept. The coach will help his own profession immeasurably if he will help curb the growing tendency toward professionalism among players. It is highly indiscreet for a coach to predict winners when such predictions may be used by a gambling element. Commercialization by a coach of his name for advertising purposes not only tends to hurt his profession but is likely to exert a harmful influence on the younger generation, the athletes who take him as an example.

"Indulgence in campus politics by coaches tends to no good end, either for themselves or their work. So long as a coach holds to the theory that the game is the thing, and that a man's fitness for the team is measured solely by his ability as a player and not by reason of membership in any fraternity or student group, he will keep the respect of his players and their loyalty as well.

"Gambling destroys stabilization. There are those who start a whispering campaign against the good names of innocent parties when they lose a wager. Dr. Dudley of Vanderbilt once said: 'Betting should not be practiced at any time, but certainly not on games where gentlemen engage . . .'

"There are certain qualities that a football coach must have to be successful and to reflect credit on his profession. He must not only be versed in the technique of the game, but he must be a natural leader. No matter how able he may be as a strategist, no matter how thorough his knowledge of the fine points of the



game may be, no matter how efficient he may be as a teacher, if he is not a leader who can inspire his men he does not belong in the coaching profession. This lack of inspiration is probably more often than is realized the reason for defeated teams. Growing standards are doing much to stabilize the profession as a whole, and it should be the concern of all coaches to keep these standards advancing . . ."

After two decades we have precious little to add to that summary of a football coach's responsibilities to his game and to his profession.

#### VALUE OF FOOTBALL

It is our well-considered if prejudiced opinion, after nearly 40 years in football as player and coach, that the game is worth the playing.

On some sides, it is true, the game has been permitted to escape from its correct position in the college or high school program. On occasions its importance to the school has been exaggerated. At times the general public takes the game too seriously.

These excesses, for which many of us are to blame, are even now in the process of correction—correction which is inevitable. They are neither permanent nor basic in football. In any event, they are not faults of football as a game.

Football, in its rightful place, is the most wholesome and the most valuable sport in schools and colleges today. As no other sport or pastime, it teaches a boy in his formative years to control and command his own powers; to focus them upon a single end, and to mobilize them quickly and completely. Football teaches him to think fast and realistically, to disregard pain and risk in pursuit of a desired end, to subordinate his interests to those of the group. It teaches him to call up and expend in an emergency his last reserves of strength and courage and to pour out all his energy in furious effort. At the same time he learns



to observe the rules of the game, regard the rights of others and stay within limits dictated by decency and sportsmanship.

Football not only teaches a boy the will to win and the way to win, but something else—it teaches him how to meet defeat. When he is defeated, what is his attitude? Does he curl up and quit? Does he whine? Does he attack the sportsmanship and ability of his opponent? Or does he keep his chest out and his head up and face the world with clear eyes and self-respect? In football he will learn to consider defeat merely as a temporary setback, and in his heart he will echo the words of a brave old Scotsman wounded in battle:

*"Fight on, my men," Sir Andrew said,  
"A little I'm hurt, but yet not slain;  
I'll just lie down and bleed awhile,  
And then I'll rise and fight again."*

This is training, it seems to us, that turns a young man toward good and useful citizenship. We reiterate that football is a game worth playing, that it is worth playing well and that it cannot be played well unless it is played hard. If this book can help to spread that philosophy and contribute a little something to its practical application, our efforts will have brought a rich reward.

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### *About the Author:*

## **DANA X. BIBLE**

After 34 full years of coaching football, Dana X. Bible can look back on an enviable record, both as a teacher and rules maker.

In his 29 years with senior college squads, Bible won 14 conference championships. His college teams won 209 games, tied 19 and lost but 64. He has 25 years of service with the National Football Rules Committee and is past president of the American Football Coaches Association.

Bible's coaching career began at Brandon Prep in his native Tennessee, shortly after his graduation in 1912 from Carson-Newman College. In 1913, he moved to Mississippi College for a three-year span, before taking over in October, 1916, at Louisiana State University to finish the season there. From 1917 through 1928, with 1918 off to serve as an air corps lieutenant, he coached at Texas A&M College.

The 1929 season was the first of eight successful years at Nebraska, and in 1937 he arrived at the University of Texas for a 10-year coaching assignment. With the 1946 season, he retired from active football work, but remains as the Longhorns' Athletic Director.

Notable in his victory string are these items: (1) untied, unscored-on teams in 1917 and 1919 (and through 1920 until Texas won, 7-3, in the annual Thanksgiving classic); (2) five Southwest Conference titles at Texas A&M; (3) a half-dozen championships in the Big Six during his eight years at Nebraska; and (4) three Conference titles in his last five years at Texas.

Bible was born in Jefferson City, Tennessee, on October 8, 1891. In addition to his schooling at Jefferson City and Carson-Newman, he has done post-graduate work at the University of North Carolina, Ohio State University and Centre College.

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